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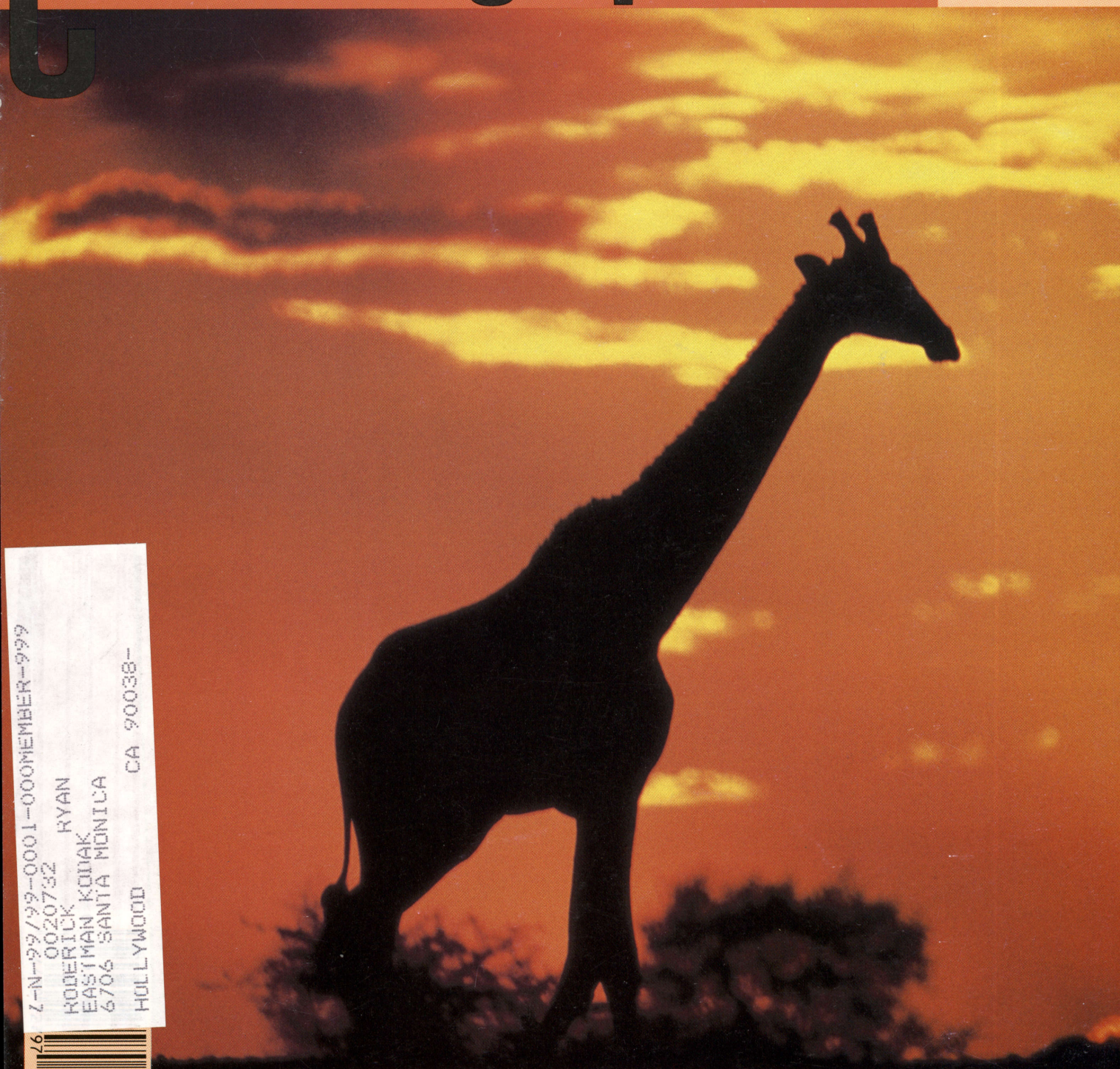

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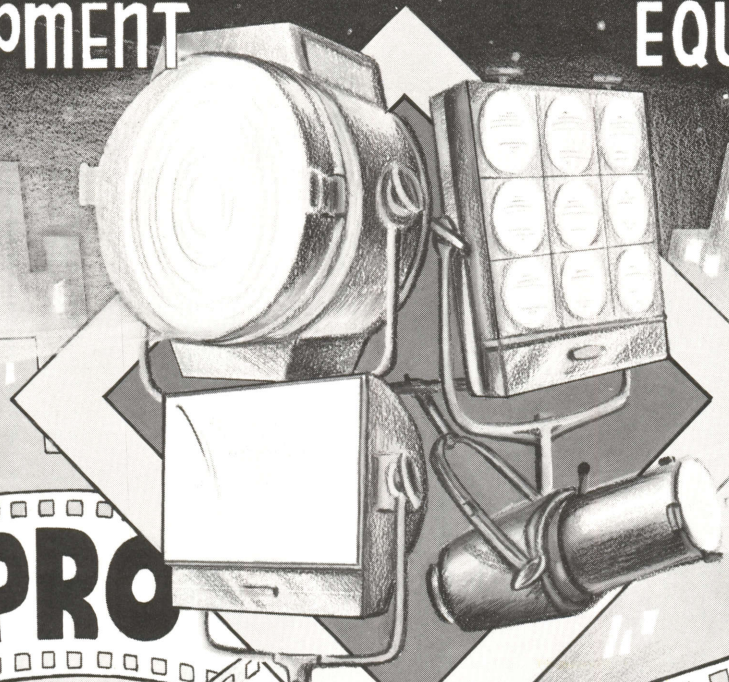

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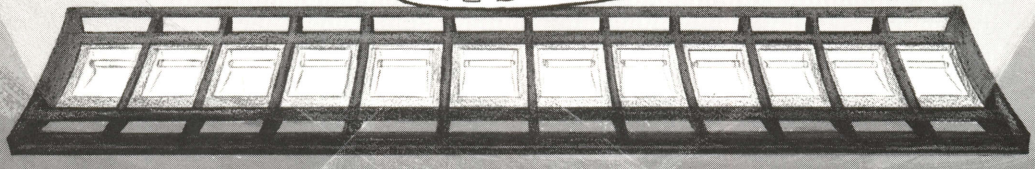

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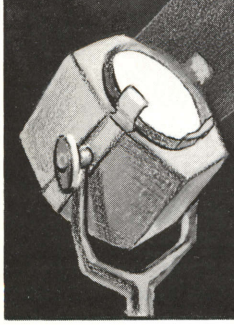

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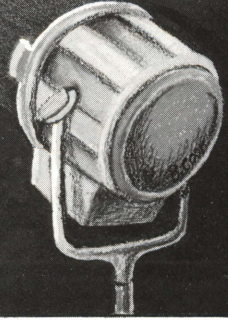

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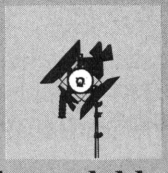

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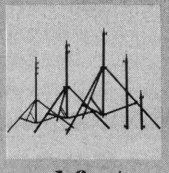

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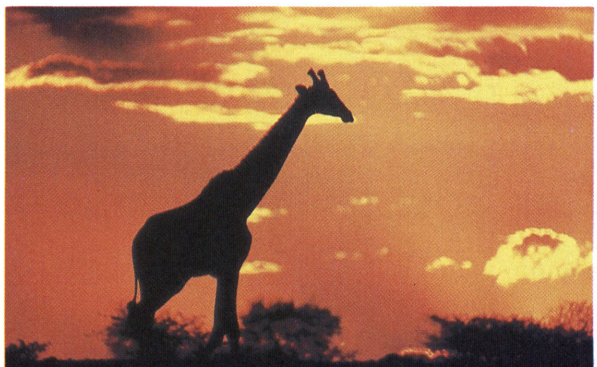

On Our Cover:
Sunset in Namibia. Photo by David and Carol Hughes.

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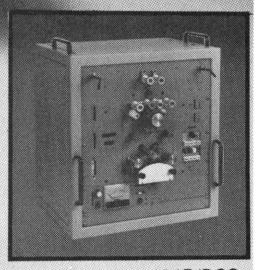

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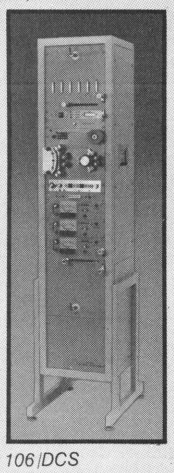

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The American Society of Cinematographers is not a labor union or a guild, but is an educational, cultural and professional organization. Membership is by invitation to those who are actively engaged as Directors of Photography and have demonstrated outstanding ability. Not all cinematographers can place the initials ASC *after their names.* ASC *membership has become one of the highest honors that can be bestowed upon a professional cinematographer, a mark of prestige and distinction.*

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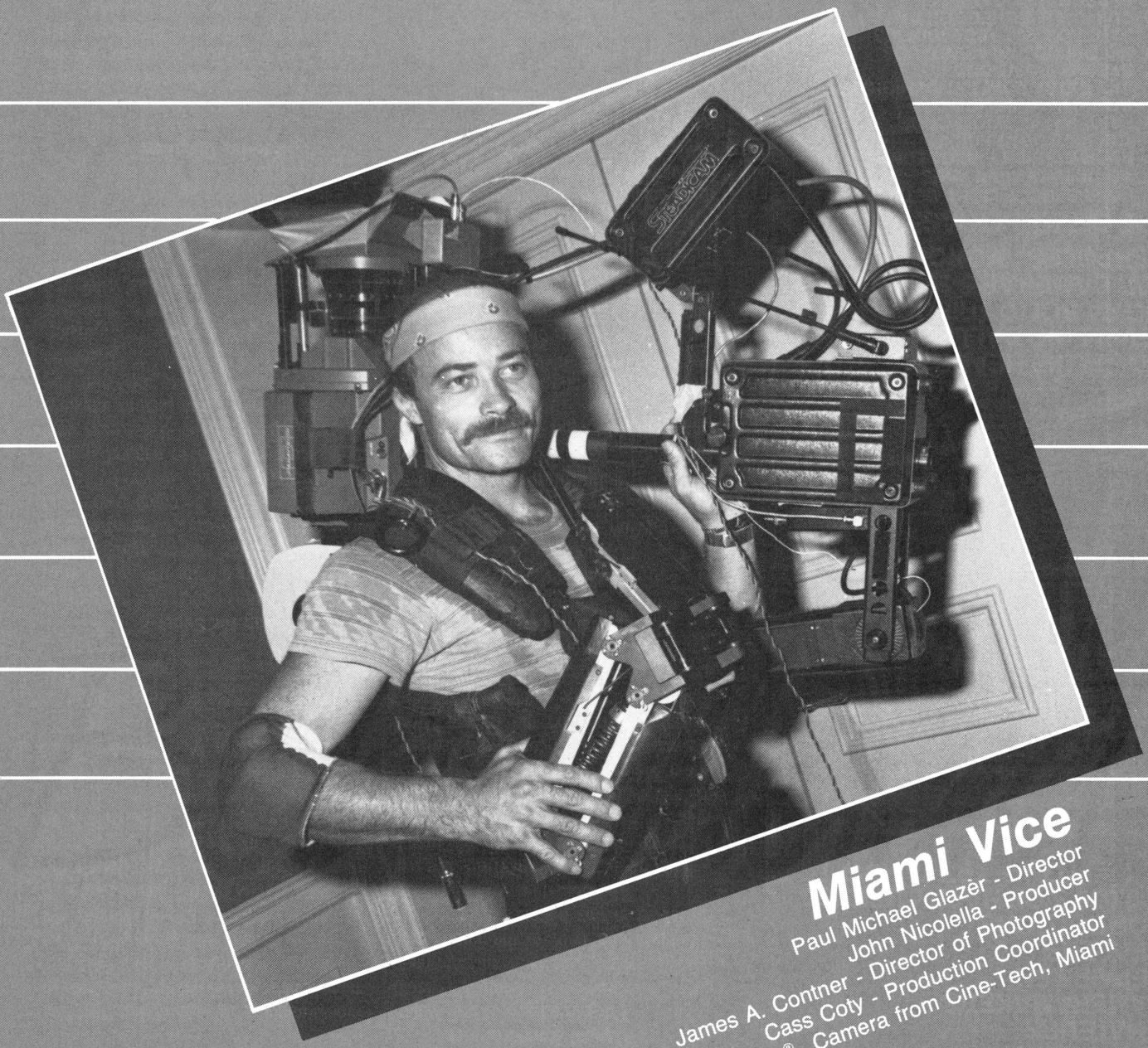

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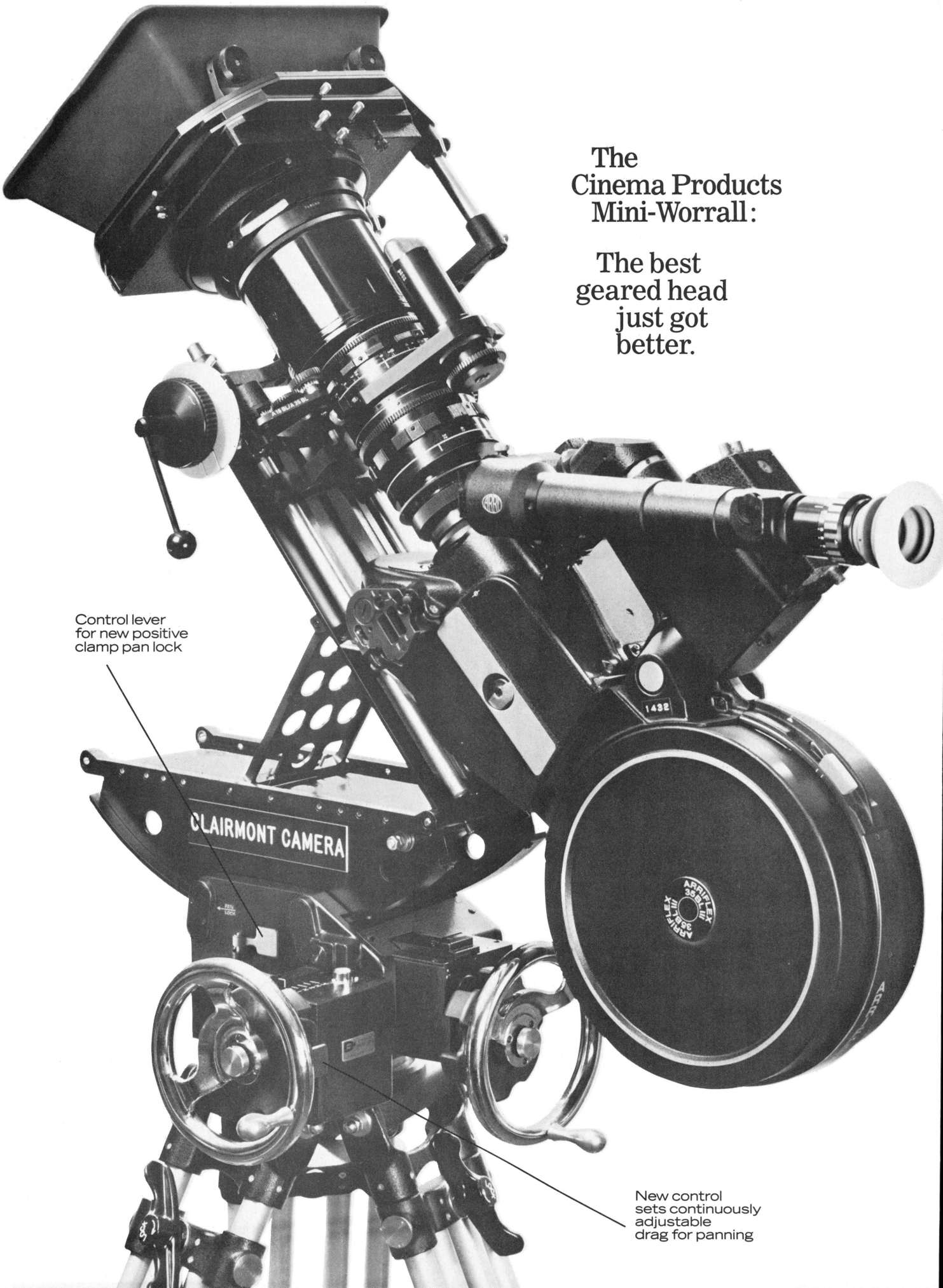
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Letters

Manual Announcement

The 5th edition of the American Cinematographer Manual is sold out. We thank you for your patronage and continued faith in the information contained in this historic publication.

The 6th edition of the manual will not be available until 1986. We will announce its publication in this magazine. Meanwhile, we cannot take orders or hold money, so please do not send either. As soon as it is physically possible, we will have a completely revised, re-issued edition on the market. Until then, we beg your indulgence.

—George Turner,
Editor, *American*
Cinematographer

Correction

Though we are well-intentioned when we publish a story, we sometimes err.

In the story of "Birds Over Hollywood" (Aug. 1985) we pictured Stan McClain, SOC, with helicopter pilot Dave Jones. However, his name was misspelled and we failed to credit his work in the article itself. He is the aerial cameraman for the "Airwolf" television show.

—Ed.

However . . .

As much as I enjoy your magazine each month, and do make a point of trying to read it cover to cover, I am forced to point out that the photograph which you published in the August issue on page 64 is upside down, and I think backwards.

Thank you,
—Sean Skilling
Producer
New York

Humans are frail!

Wrong Photog

As lead camera assistant on *Silverado* I anxiously awaited receiving my July issue of *American* Cinematographer. *Silverado* was my first feature as a key assistant, a big step in my career in camera.

I was disappointed that someone would mistakenly identify me as John Bailey on the crane photo on page 54. I'm the short guy; John's the tall person in the lower photograph. Usually it's the camera assistant who sits next to the camera pulling focus.

—Mako Koiwai
Santa Monica, CA

Sorry. The studio supplied the caption.

Plug for Super-8

Thank you for publishing proof that through the use of Super-8, high quality films can be made at very low cost. The makers of *The Ghosts of Greenstone* are to be complimented on their daring not to be swayed by all the prejudice that seems to abound against the small gauge. Super-8 serves a vital function in the motion picture industry. It allows people to make their first film without staking the family quail farm on the film's success. And, most importantly, it allows a beginning filmmaker to learn and make mistakes while the cost of those inevitable mistakes is still cheap.

—Robert Abrams
New York, N.Y.

Format Question

The recent re-issue of *Oklahoma* in 30 fps Todd-AO has raised a question no one of my acquaintance has been able to answer. Were the Todd-AO prints of *Oklahoma* and *Around the World in 80 Days* released in two different formats, one for use on flat screens and the other for use on deeply curved screens? I hope one of your readers may have the answer.

—Wm. E. Hewitt
Baltimore, Md.

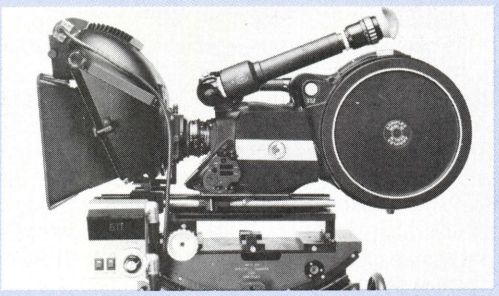
ARRIUPDATE

Published periodically by the Arriflex Corporation

Vol. 7, No. 1, August 1985

LIGHTFLEX

As announced earlier, ARRI purchased all assets and worldwide rights to the LIGHTFLEX system from Leigh Interests, PLC, in Birmingham, England. We acquired Lightflex because it's a technology that can provide additional creative controls to both cameramen and directors working in film and video production. In certain situations, it may also yield production cost efficiencies.



Lightflex, with new reflector/mask combination, light source and electronic dimmer.

Lightflex the technology has already been in wide use for many years, and its effectiveness demonstrated as recently as with John Alonzo, ASC and his work on RUNAWAY, and with Woody Omens, ASC, whose three-part show EVERGREEN was broadcast on NBC this past Februray. Lightflex the product, on the other hand, required extensive re-engineering in order to make it easier to handle, more predictable in its performance, and more versatile in its range of applications.

The Lightflex Principle

Lightflex is an on-camera accessory, mounted in front of the lens, which overlays a controlled amount of light over the scene to be photographed, at the time of exposure. It allows the cameraman to modify the gamma curve of any film stock *in the camera* while filming, thus extending the photometric range of the film several stops, without affecting the grain. When Lightflex is used on video cameras, it increases recording sensitivity without increasing noise. The result, for both film and video image recording, is more detail in the shadow areas, and a reduction in perceived grain or noise. Lightflex also permits in-camera color modifications, using special Lightflex filter packs, to selectively tone the image *without* affecting highlights or fleshtones, and for period or special effects.

Lightflex's New Design

The heart of every Lightflex unit is the patented, curved reflector which overlays a controlled amount of white or colored light on the image. The old system had two: one for 14mm to 28mm lenses, and the other for 35mm to 80mm lenses.

Lightflex's new "swing-away" housing.

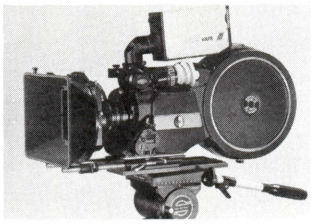
(cont. pg. 2)

VAFE

The application of standard 80 bit, SMPTE Time Code to film production and post-production is a hot topic in our industry right now, and for very good reasons. The "marriage" seems ideal—the superior imaging characteristics of 16mm and 35mm film, and the highly cost-efficient post-production technologies of tape. With this in mind, we've introduced ARRI TimeCode (ATC), optical SMPTE time code on film, and VAFE, our tape-oriented film camera system that utilizes ATC, a new color video tap, and an electronic frame store.

ARRI TimeCode (ATC)

ATC, co-developed with Coherent Communications, Inc., optically records standard 80 bit SMPTE time code on the sound-track edge of the camera negative. Already available in our 16SR cameras, the time code is *burned* onto the negative permanently, and cannot be erased or lost. The system will use any film stock with the same results. Each frame of film is encoded with hour, minute, second and frame number, plus up to 8 hex digits of user information, such as camera number, roll number, scene and take numbers.



VAFE System, with our new color video tap mounted on a 35BL-3.

The system consists of three modules. The Camera Module controls the special LED in the camera aperture, which flashes the code and exposes the film during the pulldown cycle. It provides standard continuous time code for 16mm cameras in a thin bar code just outside the sound track area to assure Super 16 compatibility. For 35mm cameras, the Camera Module generates "burst" code which is condensed to about 80% of frame height and places it just inside the sprocket holes on the sound track side. The Tape Recorder Module will work with any multi-track recorder, and places the time code on the sync track or on either audio track. Sync head offset is automatically compensated for during recording.

ATC Modules for camera, and recorder, and Master Clock.

The Master Clock can perform a variety of functions. Its main purpose is to load time code into all the modules used on a shoot. Other functions include verifying sync between cameras and tape recorders, and simplifying the record-keeping normally associated with feature or multi-camera production. It also has a digital readout that displays time code and user bits. In the event that a Master Clock is unavailable or damaged, either the camera or the tape recorder modules may be used to set time and user information.

(cont. pg. 3)

(Advertisement)

Lightflex continued

The new Lightflex has one curved reflector for focal lengths of 14mm to 50mm, and a ground optical glass reflector to eliminate possible distortions when using lenses longer than 75mm.

- By far the single most important improvements were made in the light source and control of the Lightflex. To give a cameraman the greatest possible flexibility we re-engineered the unit to operate with three quartz bulbs rather than one. These bulbs are housed in a small, well ventilated compartment which is attached to and integrated into the diffusion sphere of the Lightflex. With the new electronic Dimmer Control, this arrangement gives a much wider range of operation without significant color temperature variation.

  We also found more efficient positions for the light sources in the sphere. By eliminating the losses due to the shielding required in the original single bulb design, the power efficiency of the system has been increased substantially.

- The main Lightflex unit, for standard lenses, is mounted on the camera bridgeplate via a "swing away" support. This makes all lens changes and cleaning functions much easier.

- The various shades and flags, and the multitude of masks and single pieces making up the system have been reduced to only two discrete units: one for wide to normal focal lengths and another for long lenses. For the assistant, this will make handling substantially easier.

- Connecting the lens and the Lightflex is a standard Arriflex 3″ x 3″ filter stage and bellows. Now, only one adapter system for most fixed focal length lenses.

- The Filter Tray, located between the Light Sphere and the Reflector, has been simplified and greatly improved. In particular, several layers of diffusion gel have been replaced with specially made, high diffusion glass. This helps obtain absolutely even illumination across the frame, while at the same time providing more resistance against scratching and deterioration.

New Lightflex Dimmer Control.

- The new Lightflex Dimmer Control replaces the old and very heavy Variac control. The new control weighs only 14 oz., and is an electronic dimmer designed to be used either handheld or attached to the side of the Lightflex base bracket. It incorporates two switches to control the multiple lamps in the Lightflex housing (switches have LEDs to indicate when the system is on), a digital readout that measures the voltage at the lamps to guarantee repeatable light levels, and a precision dimmer dial. The Dimmer Control will operate on either 115 or 230 VAC. With the appropriate cables, it can be used remotely for dolly and Louma crane shots.

Re-designed for Assistants

Our objective in re-designing Lightflex was to make it easier to use. Especially for the assistant, the goal was to reduce the number of individual pieces and operations required to efficiently use the system. We did so by re-designing the Lightflex to become an integral part of any camera system it is used on. The new Lightflex is easier to use, right down to the reduced number of cases required to hold it. Detailed instructions, as well as Lightflex Set-Up Charts, are provided with every system. These Charts, together with the standardized filter packs will provide a starting point for cinematographers prior to modifying Lightflex to suit their own creative ideas. Once the new systems are consigned to Lightflex Rental houses, seminars will be held throughout the industry.

MIAMI VICE

First To Get New ARRI 12kw HMI

J.B. Jones, owner of Unique Producer's Service in Miami which provides the entire lighting package for MIAMI VICE, just took delivery of two new ARRI 12kw HMI lights for use on MIAMI VICE. The show, which has gained enormous media attention for its "look," has used ARRI HMIs from the beginning.

MIAMI VICE's new ARRI 12kW HMI.

Jones, the show's special effects expert noted, "we went with the ARRI 12kw lights for two reasons. First, its wide, flat beam, lots of light, and no hot spots like with some other 12kw's. Second, the ARRIs are tougher, particularly inside the lamphead, and more able to take the kind of treatment they get while on location. We use all the other ARRI HMIs on MIAMI VICE, and based our decision to buy the 12kw's on that experience."

The ARRI 12kw HMI is the most compact 12,000 watt lamphead available, but still features a 20″ diameter Fresnel lens to provide a wide spread beam. The ARRI 12kw uses either ILC or Osram lamps without modification, and produces over 800 footcandles at 100 feet. Proven features include ribbed aluminum construction, modular starting circuitry, safety cut-off switch, center-of-gravity adjustment, and specially designed ballasts assure reliable location performance. Both the head and ballast conform to strict safety standards.

New ARRISUN HMI PAR Lights

Introduced this year at the NAB Show, the ARRISUN 5 and 12 are designed for the new, popular 575W and 1200W sealed beam, daylight PAR lamps from Sylvania and Thorn. ARRISUNS are high efficiency fixtures with extremely high output, making them ideal for interior bounce, and exterior punch lighting.

The ARRISUN's tough thermoplastic housing is ideal for all location situations. "Cool touch" handles, easy lamp access, and safety cut off switch provide convenient operation. ARRISUNS operate from standard 575W and 1200W ARRI ballasts.

ARRISUN 5 & 12 lights.

New Shoulder Magazine for 35-3

The new 400 ft. coaxial shoulder magazine for the 35-3 is now available. Providing the lowest camera/magazine profile possible for the 35-3, the magazine counterbalances the 35-3 for handheld shooting, and is contoured to fit your shoulder. Without film, it weighs only 8½ lbs.

New 400 ft. Shoulder Mag and Offset Viewfinder Door for 35-3.

The new shoulder magazine is constructed from an injection-molded, high impact resistant plastic that, during manufacture, is "foamed" around a strong, lightweight metal frame. It incorporates a mechanical footage counter and is supplied with a loop protector. It measures 18 in. long, 6 in. wide, and 8¾ in. high.

"Offset" Finder Door for 35-3

To complement the handheld configuration of the 35-3, the "offset" finder door was designed specifically for use with the new shoulder magazine. It positions the eyepiece about two inches out, and 4 inches forward from the standard finder eye level, greatly enhancing handheld operation of the camera.

(Advertisement)

VAFE continued

Color Video Tap

The major element in the VAFE System is our modified, ½" Saticon single tube color video tap. Designed specifically to work with 35BL-3 and 35-3 cameras, the new color video tap replaces the standard ARRI black and white video camera. At 270 lines resolution, it provides sharp video images over a wide range of lighting and contrast situations. The sensitivity of the camera was increased by boosting the target voltage of the tube.

Because color video cameras don't have the dynamic range of high quality black and white cameras, and knowing the low lighting levels common in film production today, we've also added a new, very sensitive, high resolution black and white camera to replace the VAFE color camera in those extreme situations.

VAFE Control Box.

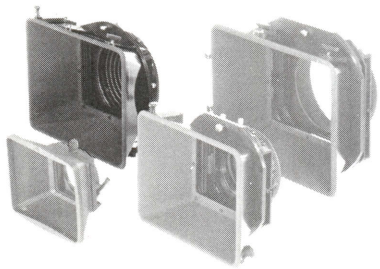
Flicker-free Video

The heart of the System, a digital frame store, was designed to remove the flicker caused by the rotation of the mirror reflex shutter. Advanced micro processor technology is used to "interlace" a computer image in the blank periods, effectively regenerating a continuous video image of reasonably high quality.

The Control Unit has inputs for time code; userbit entry for take and scene information; character display; the frame rate selector and film sensitivity control, for speeds of 24, 25, 29, 30 and 30 drop frame, and ASA settings from 16 to 1600 as well as various other inputs and outputs.

The Newest ARRI Matte Box–the 5" x 6"

Until now, there have been two matte box choices for Arriflex 35mm cameras. The 6.6" x 6.6" Studio Matte Box, with three rotating and sliding filter frames, accommodates any prime or zoom lens, in any aspect ratio, without vignetting. The other, the 4" x 4" Swing-Away Matte Box, is much smaller and lighter, but covers only prime lenses. Missing, thus far, is a Matte Box that would cover "90%" of all situations, which we now hope to provide with the new, versatile 5" x 6" Production Matte Box.



New 5" x 6" Production Matte Box.

Suitable for all ARRI 35mm camera systems, the 5" x 6" will handle all prime and zoom lenses currently used, without vignetting. It has three fully rotatable filter frames—two built into the matte box, with the third, a round stage, mounted via a "snap on" collar in the back casting. A selection of aluminum filter frames adapt any 4" x 4" or Panavision-size filters to the 5" x 6" stages.

The 5" x 6" matte box is mounted on a swing-away bracket, and is supplied with six inch and 138mm round filter reflex prevention rings, a top mounted flag, and standard focal length masks.

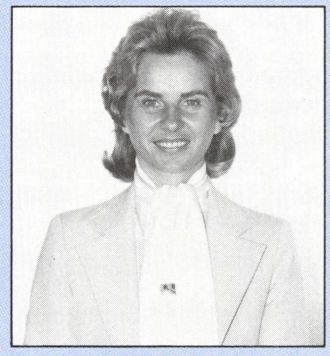
Also NEW at ARRI...

MARGARET M. REGAN

Our expanded New York sales department is now headed by Margaret, who joined us recently after completing her M.B.A. at Iona College. After positions at IBM and as an account executive at a large New York importing firm, Margaret is now involved in importing, spare parts, purchasing and sales. She can be reached at (914) 353-1400 regarding catalog and spare parts sales.

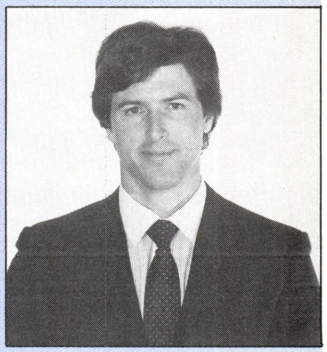
LISA C. BLOOM

Lisa is our new Lighting Sales Administrator in New York, and assists ARRI Lighting Product Manager, Charles Davidson, in all aspects of our HMI and ARRILITE business. She is an M.B.A. candidate at Iona College, and has held positions in marketing home computers, and in administration at the promotions firm of Robert Landau Associates, working on such accounts as Burger King, Miller Beer and Nabisco.



TERRIE SUDOL

Our newest staff addition in the Burbank office, Terrie came to Arriflex from the American Film Institute, where for the past two years she was assistant to AFI Director Jean Firstenberg. Previous to that, she was assistant to Roman Harte, director of the AFI's Production Services. Terrie is now our Lighting Sales Rep on the West Coast, and handles sales of HMI lights, ARRILITES, and grip equipment, as well as related customer services. Terrie may be reached at (818) 841-7070.



BILL RUSSELL

Bill joined ARRI as Western Sales Manager in 1983, and due to the hiatus in publishing our UPDATES this is the first opportunity we've had to announce that he's now with us. He came to Arriflex from CFI Labs, where he was an account executive in the film sales dept., and previous to that he was assistant to director Ted Kotcheff, working on such films as FIRST BLOOD. He began his career in our industry with Arriflex, back in 1972. Bill handles all camera sales and related customer services, and also oversees general operations as they concern sales and administration at the Burbank office.

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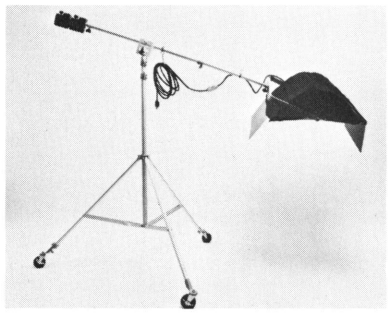
New Products



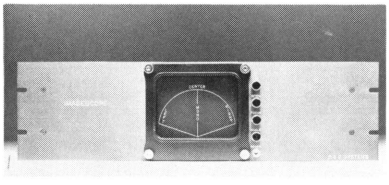
Air-Cushioned Grand Stand

The improved Lowel Grand Stand has air-cushioned extension sections. As a light, reflector, or boom descends, air-pressure increases to prevent damage to equipment, lamps and fingers. These one-way "shocks" offer little resistance while elevating the sections.

The Grand Stand has one extendable leg for leveling on uneven ground or steps, and for tilting the stand, for example, into a corner.

A hole is provided in each leg to accept Lowel casters, Lowel anchors (which can be pushed into ground for greatly increased stability when reflectors are used), or nails (for securing to platforms, etc.).

For futher information, write Lowel Light Manufacturing, 475 Tenth Ave., New York 10018. (212) 947-0950.



New for Stereo Audio

B & B Systems is proud to announce the Imagescope. Imagescope was developed to answer the long-standing need for a single instrument that would give a true visual representation of a stereo audio signal. Imagescope displays the complex stereo audio signal graphically, showing the actual dispersion pattern of the sound energy as it will appear in a typical listening environment.

In one affordable, self contained package, Imagescope gives the user a true visual real time representation of the balance, separation and level of the stereo signal. In the past, it took several instruments as well as a trained engineer to evaluate these parameters.

In recording and production, Imagescope is used to position exactly, any track or tracks in the stereo image, in real time. Stereo phase errors are easily avoided. Imagescope is also used at transmission sites to verify separation and/or mono compatibility, making Imagescope the ideal tool for all stereo TV and AM stereo applications.

B & B Systems also manufactures and markets the AM-1, AM-2, and AM-3 stereo phase and SMPTE Time Code verification systems. B & B Systems products are in use by major networks, television production and broadcast facilities, radio stations and recording studios worldwide.

B & B Systems, Inc. is located at 2811 North Avenue Stanford, Valencia, CA 91355. (805) 257-4853.

Cordless Headphone System

Nady's infrared cordless stereo headphone system allows studio musicians to monitor through a high-fidelity headphone without the restriction of headphone cords. The system works with any audio source, and has a range of about 35 feet. Special transmitter units are available from the factory to provide more coverage in larger or oddly-shaped rooms. These transmitters are series-linked in a master/slave arrangement.

The headphone/receiver has full frequency response, 50 to 15,000 Hz, and is powered by a single 9v battery. The transmitter is AC powered, and plugs directly to any audio output, sending out high-quality audio, including perfectly separated stereo. The infrared light signal, which transmits the audio information usually carried by a cord, is picked up by an infrared sensor on top of the lightweight headphones. The reception zone is 360 degrees, so the wearer has complete freedom of movement, Any number of receiver/headphones can be used in an area.

For more information, contact: Nady Systems, Inc., 1145 65th St., Oakland, CA 94608. (415) 652-2411.

Latest in Vests—

The Vested Interest of Carrollton, Texas is now marketing a new vest for ENG, EFP photographers and sound-techs. Named the "Xtrahand," this functional, lightweight vest was designed and "street-tested" by a working TV photojournalist. The design allows extra batteries, tapes and accessories to be carried more comfortably and securely, and insures access with the left

continued

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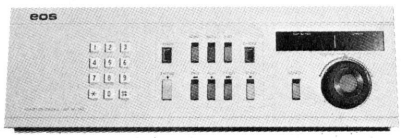
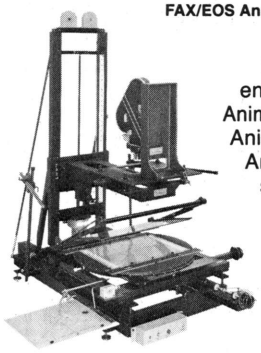
ANIMATION

The newly acquired **FAX** Animation Division will introduce the **FAX/EOS** Single Frame Video Animation Controller for broadcast U-Matic ¾″ video animation.



FAX/EOS Animation Controller



FAX Jr. Animation Stand

In addition, the entire line of **FAX** Animation Products; Animation Stands, Artists Discs and supplies will be on display.

AUDIO

Swintek Wireless Systems

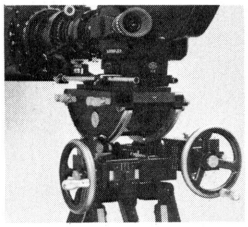
Wilson Walkie Talkie

See and hear the **SWINTEK** Wireless Microphone products, as well as the durable and economically priced **WILSON WALKIE TALKIES.** There will be live demonstrations of the **SONY XTAL/SYNC** Mini Recorders, **COHERENT** Time Code System, **SMART SLATE** Electronic Slating Systems and the improved, popular **ZEPPELIN** Wind Screen System.

PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT

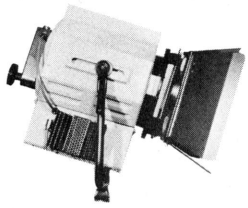
Image 300 35mm High-Speed Camera

See the **IMAGE 300 35mm HI-SPEED** Camera, the **MIGNON** 35mm light weight Portable Projector, The **IMERECT** Low-Angle Prisms Models 500 and 925, the all new compact **MINI MOY** 12″ Geared Camera Head, and also the new, metal, lightweight **PRO-LEGS** Tripod, perfect for quick-news and documentary production set-ups.



Mini Moy Geared Camera Head

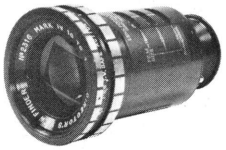
LIGHTING



575W Meteor Ballast Free HMI Lights

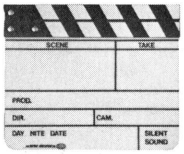
The **GALAXY** Lighting Division will introduce the revolutionary **BALLAST FREE HMI** Lighting System consisting of the **575w METEOR, 1200w COMET,** and the **2500w SUPER STAR.** All the advantages of HMI light but without the ballasts! **GALAXY** is the one to see this year.

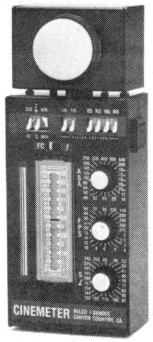
PRODUCTION ACCESSORIES



Mark IV Director's Viewfinder

Look through the latest improved **MARK IV** Directors Viewfinder and operate the extraordinary "Light Years Ahead" **CINEMETER** for filmmakers. **SUPER GRIPS,** new style **SCRIPT BAGS** and **DITTY BAGS** and the latest in Dry Marker ***SCENE SLATES*** will be on display.





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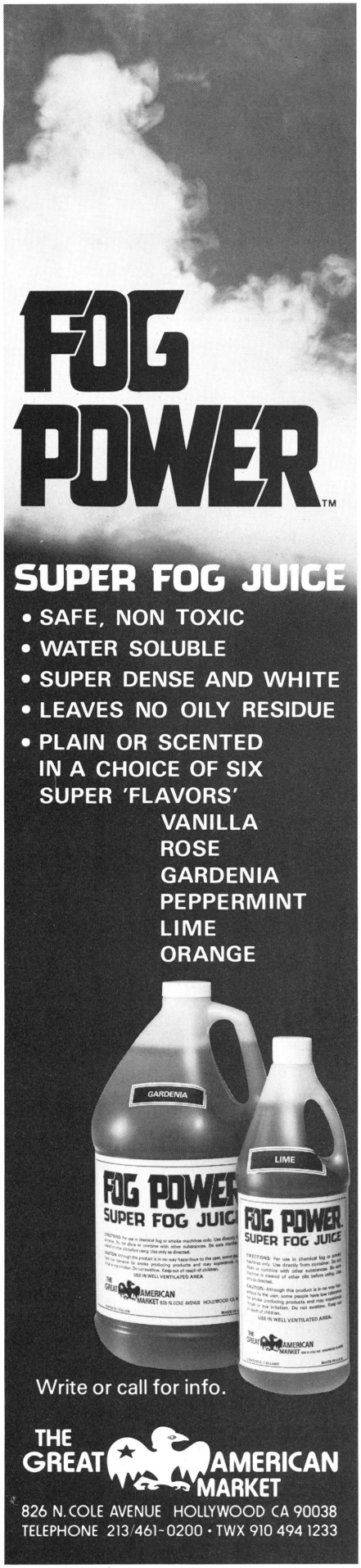


hand, while using the right hand for the camera.

The Xtrahand is custom built by a parachute and tactical gear manufacturer and features a body made of tough, ventilated, nylon mesh. The pockets, made of water-repellent nylon, are custom fitted for use with either ½" or ¾" tape formats. The pockets can be arranged for one-man-band or sound tech use.

For further information, write The Vested Interest, P.O. Box 112811, Carrollton, TX 75011. (214) 241-4783.

Tiziano 200-Watt CID

DeSisti Lighting recently introduced the Tiziano #2200, a new 200-watt open face focusable discharge light for single-ended CID lamps. Applications of the Tiziano 200 range from location filming such as car shots, where daylight balance is necessary, to video remote production and ENG work where a lightweight instrument with a high lumen output is required for handheld operation. The model #2200 produces 473 footcandles in spot position and 124 footcandles in flood position at 10'–0".

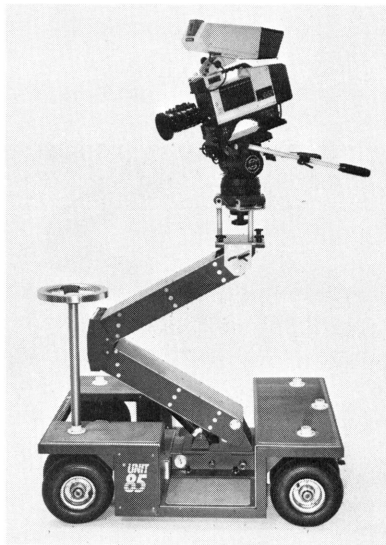
The Tiziano system is available with a pistol type handle grip or a yoke for hanging, each with ⅝" socket for stand mounting. Focusing from spot (18° beam angle) to flood (52° beam angle) is obtained by a thumbwheel located near the handle for one-hand operation.

The Tiziano can be powered with a special 30 or 24 Volt DC power supply. The DC ballast is electronic flicker-free, weighs only 6 lbs., and can be dimmed 30% to extend the life of the battery power source. The electronic power supply is equipped with a power cable and standard 2 pin connector for attachment to conventional 30 volt battery belts. Also available is a standard AC ballast at 120 or 220/240 volts.

For further information, contact DeSisti Lighting, 328 Adams Street, Hoboken, New Jersey 07030. (201) 792-4980.

Arm and Dolly

A unique development in lifting TV and film cameras is the Unit 85 "scissors type" camera arm. The minimum dimensions of 70 x 20 x 20 cm ensure a particularly low camera position (35 cm) which practice has shown is more important than high positions. However the (absolute vertical) travel of the camera arm is 105 cm, so that an appreciable height of 140 cm can be reached. (camera platform height).

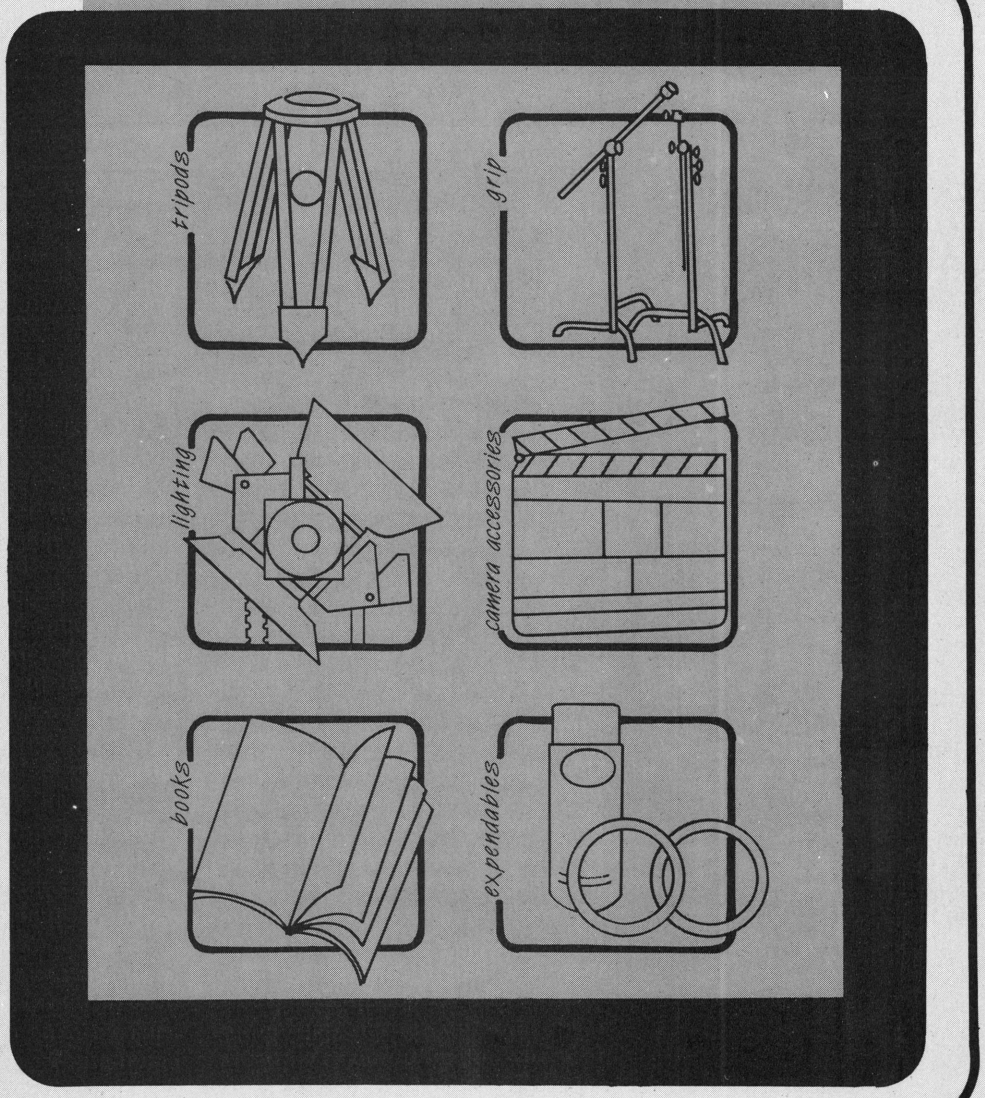


Because of a "closed" circuit pneumatic system, the counter pressure can easily be adjusted to the weight of the type of camera you are using, by means of a hand or foot pump. You do not have to refill or pump during the shooting as long as you use the same load on the camera platform. After the shooting, allow the pneumatic circuit to run dry and return it to the desired pressure by means of the foot or hand pump.

The camera arm is suitable for any load up to 40 kg. The unit as a

continued

Birns & Sawyer



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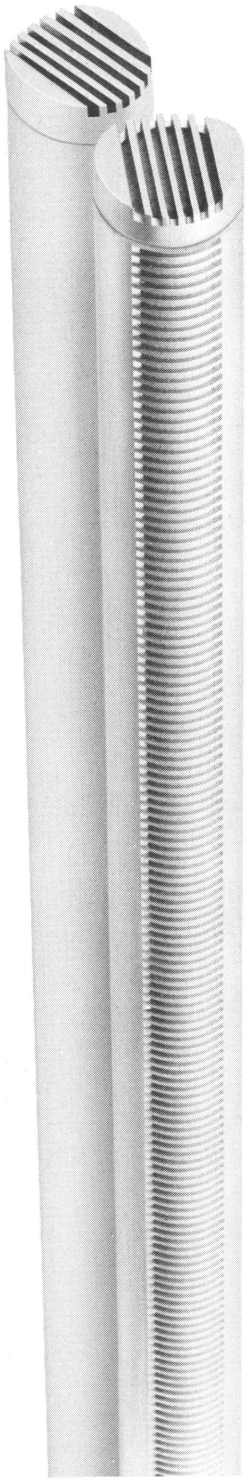

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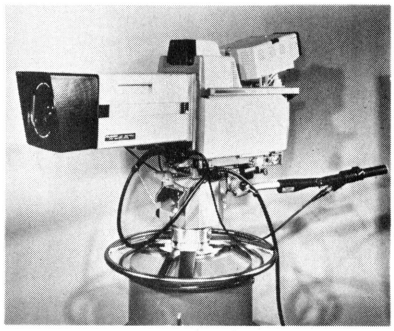
whole weighs approx 10 kg, is extremely stable, has an enormous movement potential and is virtually maintenance free. The camera arm can also be fitted to existing Egripment dollies, such as the Egripment Doorway Dolly.

The dolly is equipped with combination wheels (balloon-and track-wheels) the balloon tire being exchangeable with hard rubber wheels. A unique locking system sets the track-wheels free when the dolly is to be used on the rails (normal standard rails). The balloon tires then hang free next to the rails. This system is locked when the balloon tires are used.

The steering is by belts, which ensures freedom from play. This also of course means that maintenance can be kept to a minimum. UNIT 85 is provided with crabsteering; it can be driven on all four wheels or in the central position, which is at the camera side when the camera arm is used.

All existing Egripment accessories can of course again be used on the UNIT 85 dolly, such as the seat swivel support, camera riser, camera leveller, mini jib etc. Egripment also intends to launch a three-wheel version of this dolly later this year.

For further information, write to Egripment, Machineweg 22, 1394 AV Nederhorst Den Berg, Amsterdam, Holland.



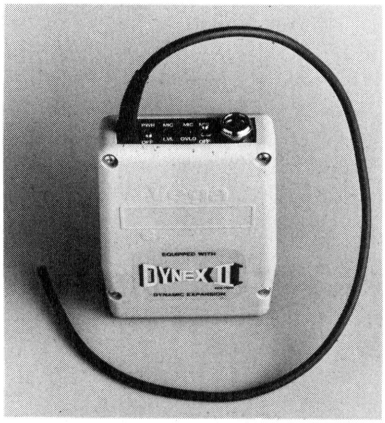
Studio/Field Color-TV Camera

As a result of an upgrading of the software of the Ikegami HK-322 studio/field color-TV camera, it is now possible to connect an Ikegami HL-79E portable ENG camera to the HK-322 control system. By adding a camera adapter and inserting a line pack between the ENG camera and the CCU of the HK-322, automatic setup from the local or remote operator's control panel may be achieved. Either triax cable (up to 1500 meters long) or multicore cable (up to 600 meters long) can be used between the line pack and the CCU. The HL-79E can also be employed as a self-contained camera, if desired.

The standard features and high performance of the HK-322 assure the achievement of quality video signals required for excellent on-air and/or first generation VTR masters. Ease of camera integration into existing systems is provided. Additional optional features further enhance the flexibility and versatility of the camera. Some of these include: color correction, chromakey output, box cursor, safe-title area indicator, zoom-lens angle indicator and two-digit camera identification number.

Completely automatic setup of the camera is provided. A third-generation centralized digital control system permits the setup of up to 24 individual cameras, sequentially or simultaneously—all from a single master control panel.

For further information, contact Ikegami Electronics (U.S.A.), Inc., 37 Brook Avenue, Maywood, N.J. 07607, (201) 368-9171.



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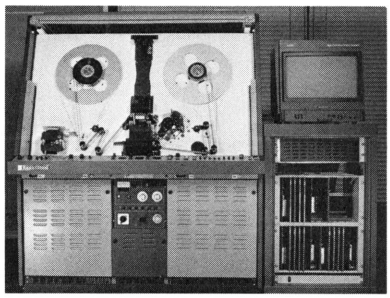
The T-37 operates on a standard 9-V alkaline battery.

For additional information, contact Cetec Vega, 9900 Baldwin Place, El Monte, California 91731.



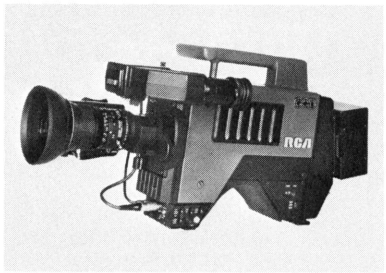
HD Telecine

Rank Cintel recently achieved a major breakthrough in telecine technology when it unveiled the world's first 1125 line flying spot high definition telecine.

Named the MK IIIHD, this system, shown in a prototype form, is based on the industry standard MK IIIC telecine which has been considerably up-graded to operate on the 1125 lines, 60 fields 2:1 interlace standard. It handles 35mm film at a fixed scanning speed of 24 frames per second to produce an effective video bandwidth of 20 MHz.

The MK IIIHD was developed by Rank Cintel so that international libraries of high definition material, namely 35mm films, could be transferred to video. An added by-product is that the knowledge gained during the research program will enable Rank Cintel to incorporate many of the HDTV benefits into standard PAL, NTSC and SECAM telecine products.

For further information, contact Marketing Services, Rank Cintel Ltd, Watton Rd Ware Herts, SG12 OAE, England.



"Slow Mo" Camera

RCA introduced the CCD-1S sports model of its solid state CCD-1 ENG Camera to broadcasters and program producers this year.

The new CCD-1S features a 1/500 second shutter which permits slow-motion/stop-action video playback on any standard VTR equipped with slow motion playback capability. No VTR modifications are required.

Like the standard CCD-1 camera, the sports model has no lag, no after image retention, no permanent image burn and no comet-tailing. Unlimited highlight handling capability, superior dynamic range and low light sensitivity are other attributes of the charge-coupled device CCD-1 and CCD-1S cameras.

With CCD's inherent lack of lag and comet-tailing and the absence of retained image burn, each television field of the picture can be as clear as those taken with focal plane and other shuttered still cameras. This is accomplished in the CCD-1S by reducing the image motion blur with a 1/500 second shutter. The motion blur of a tube camera is replaced by crisp, clear images with the CDD-1S.

The shorter exposure time provides better slow-motion and stop-action video. The faster shutter speed is traded for approximately two "f" stops in sensitivity.

For further information, contact RCA Broadcast Systems Division, P.O. Box 900, Bldg. 4-C1, Gibbsboro, N. J. 08026. (609) 435-2924.

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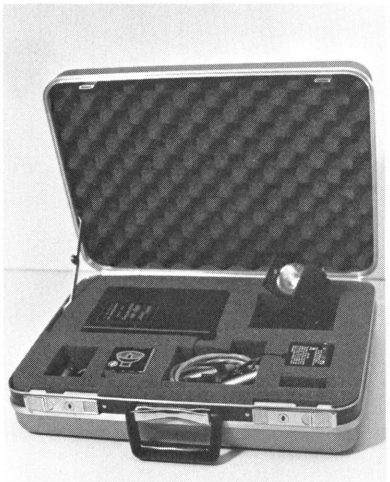

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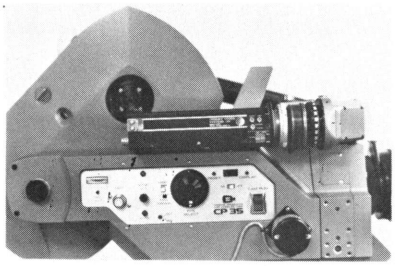
For further information contact Anton Bauer, One Controls Drive, Shelton, CT 06484. (203) 929-1100.



Insight Camera

Self-contained and ultra-sensitive, the palm-sized Insight 75 video camera is the optimum video assist camera. Cinema Products has developed the optical interface to use the Insight camera interchangeably with popular optical top assemblies including C.P's Cinevid system.

Insight's advantages are numerous. Foremost, this tiny camera features incredibly low light sensitivity. The low noise head amplifier matches the best broadcast cameras at 56db signal to noise ratio. Switchable automatic gain increases sensitivity 20 times, enhancing performance in low light levels. Also optimizing picture quality in poor visibility and inferior lighting conditions Insight features: gamma correction, soft white clip, switchable edge enhancement, and switchable automatic black level. Adjustable shading correction compensates for tube dark current shading and lens vignetting.

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For further information please contact Cinema Products Corp., 2037 Granville Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90025. (213) 478-0711.

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For more information, contact Anchor Audio, Inc., 913 W. 223rd St., Torrance, California 90502, (213) 533-5984. △

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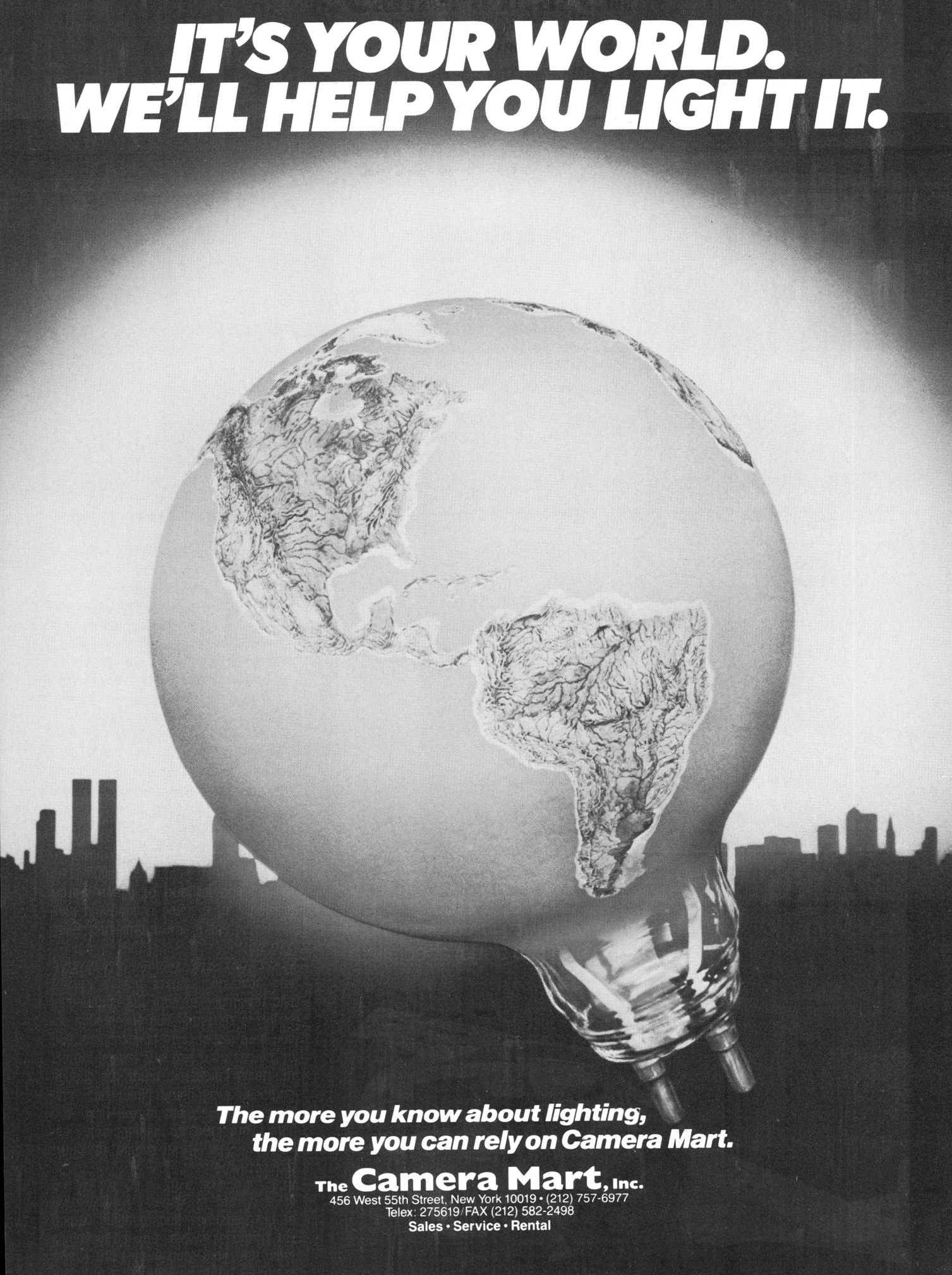

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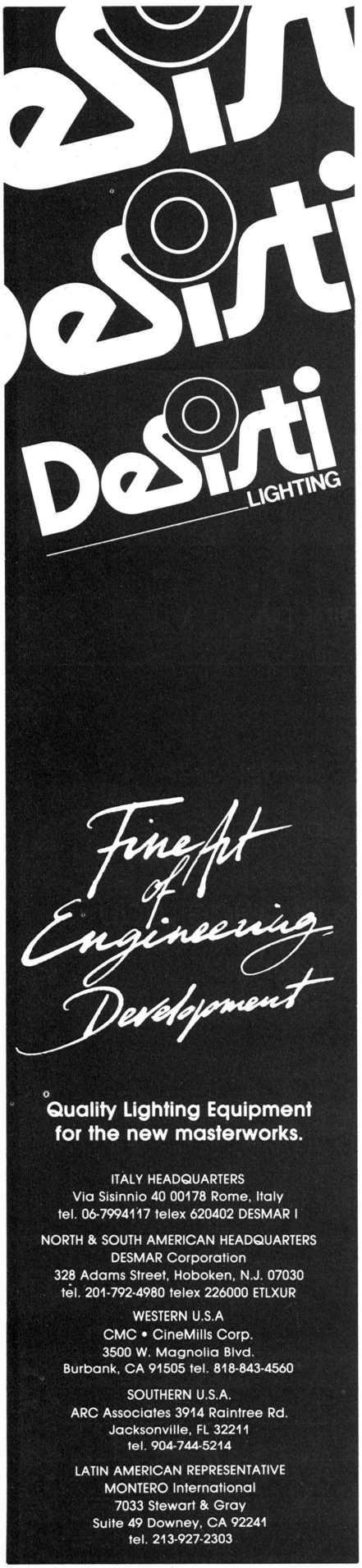

The Bookshelf

by George L. George

Several new volumes in the "Studies in Cinema" series, reviewed below, provide a significant source of scholarly research into broad aspects of film (*UMI Research Press, 300 N. Zeeb Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48106*).

The writer's contribution to film is examined in **Ben Hecht, Hollywood Screenwriter** by Jeffrey Brown Martin and **Hollywood and the Profession of Authorship 1928–40** by Richard Fine. Both books probe searchingly the question of creativity in a commercially controlled milieu and a profit-oriented studio system (*UMI $39.95 ea.*).

Dana B. Polan examines, in **The Political Language of Film and the Avant-Garde,** the esthetics of experimental film in works by Eisenstein, Brecht, Oshima and Michael Snow. In **Abstraction in Avant-Garde Films,** Maureen Cheryn Turim analyzes the challenge of innovative cinema to the current film theories (*UMI $39.95 ea.*).

In **Soviet Cinema in the Silent Era,** Denise J. Youngblood brings to light the cultural politics and institutional development that marked its evolution between 1918 and 1935. In **Struggles of the Italian Film Industry during Fascism,** Elaine Mancini describes the losing fight waged by Italian film producers for independence from government control. (*UMI $44.95 ea.*).

The director of *Superman II, Superman III* and other memorable movies is hailed by Neil Sinyard as a highly inventive and intelligent filmmaker in **The Films of Richard Lester.** The book probes perceptively the structure, visual style and often atypical casting of Lester's films (*Barnes & Noble, Totowa, NJ, $24.95*).

Ben Stoltzfus's **Alain Robbe-Grillet** situates the total *oeuvre* of the French filmmaker/novelist within the confines of new esthetics that reject the conventions of classical realism for the "mythic realism of everday life" (*Fairleigh Dickinson U. Press, Cranbury, NJ, $27.50*).

A challenging study edited by Frank Thompson, **Between Action and Cut** focuses on 5 "underknown" American directors—Victor Fleming, Roland West, Charles T. Barton, Rowland Brown and William K. Howard—a representative cross-section of the Hollywood style from the 20s to the 50s (*Scarecrow, Metuchen, NJ $22.50*).

The financial and artistic disaster that befell Michael Cimino's film *Heaven's Gate* and United Artists is discussed in **Final Cut** by Steven Bach, former UA head of production. Budgeting laxity, executive irresponsibility and creativeness running amok are the villains of this riveting story that should (but will it?) teach a lesson to the Hollywood establishment (*Morrow, NYC, $19.95*).

Roy Armes's impressive **French Cinema** traces the development of France's film production from Lumiére's 1895 patenting of the cinematograph to the 1980s. Armes stresses the rich diversity of trends and styles, and analyzes the work of leading directors against a background of historic, cultural and political change (*Oxford U. Press, NYC, $25/10.95*).

In **New German Filmmakers,** Klaus Phillips explores the work of 21 innovative directors who, between 1950 and 1970, reshaped the German cinema and brought it to international prominence. Fassbinder, Herzog, Wenders are among the filmmakers analyzed in this informative volume (*Ungar, NYC, $24.50/12.95*).

Among recently published screenplays, **Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000** by Swiss director Alain Tanner engagingly combines political statements and personal problems (*No. Atlantic Press, Berkeley, CA,*

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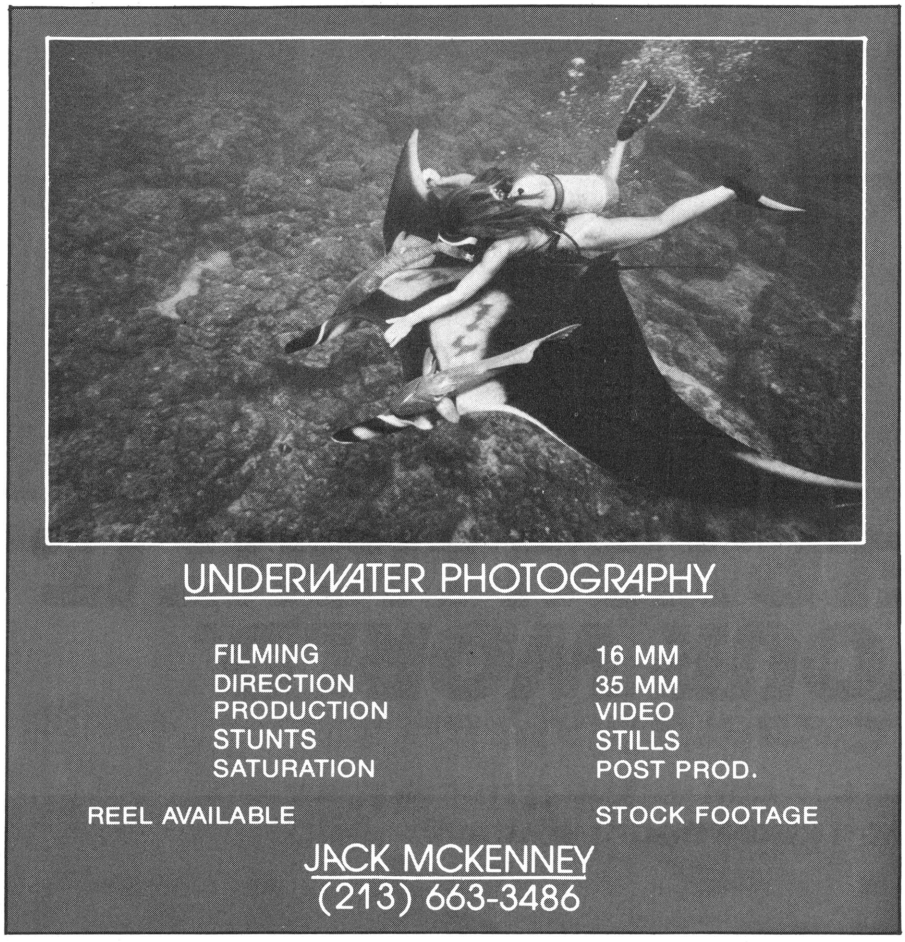

$9.95). Three scripts by the late writer/director Robert Rossen, assembled in **Three Screenplays** (edited by Steven Rossen,) include his classic *All the King's Men, Lilith* and *The Hustler* (*Garland, NYC, $35*).

British playwright and filmmaker David Hare's script **Wetherby** examines the psychodramatics of small-town life. Tom Stoppard's **Four Plays for Radio** assembles striking examples of his humorous and mordant writing style (*Faber & Faber, Manchester, MA, $8.95 and $15.95/6.95 respectively*).

The 1984 edition of **Film: The Front Line,** an annual series, features an assessment of American and European avant-garde filmmakers. Editor David Ehrenstein notes the change of themes from sexuality, social protest and pure esthetics to philosophical and linguistic concerns, and encourages active resistance to both the commercial and academic market places (*Arden Press, Box 418, Denver, CO 80201, $10.95*).

The first in a projected 3-vol. biography of a noted avant-garde filmmaker, **The Legend of Maya Deren** documents her youth, schooling, and early literary and political activities. Diligently researched by Veve A. Clark, Millicent Hodson, Catrina Neiman and photographer Francine Bailey Price, it draws a lively picture of a bright, aggressive and self-centered artist (*Anthology Film Archives/Film Culture, NYC, $40/22.50*).

Marjorie Costello and Cynthia Katz have collaborated on **Breaking into Video,** a thoroughgoing and expert guide to careers and business opportunities in an expanding industry. After explaining how the different segments of video's industrial structure interrelate, the authors list and describe jobs in production companies, video facilities, broadcasting, cable, and private and home video (*Simon & Schuster, NYC, $7.95*).

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Photographing *Man With One Red Shoe*

Produced by Victor Drai
Directed by Stan Dragoti
Photographed by Richard H. Kline, ASC

by Nora Lee

Richard Kline, ASC, is an articulate, earnest man who takes his contribution to the collaborative art of filmmaking very seriously. Although he is the son of cinematographer Benjamin Kline, he came to the film business reluctantly. He was all set to go to college in preparation for law school when economics altered his course. He took a job as a clapper boy and the bar's loss was a real boon for the motion picture industry. Since that time his skill and talent have contributed to such films as *Camelot, Star Trek the Motion Picture,* Di Laurentiis' *King Kong, Hang 'em High, Body Heat* and *Breathless.* This list is only a teaser of almost 20 years as a director of photography, but it shows one very important aspect of Kline's career – variety.

Variety *among* his films and *in* his films seems to be Kline's hallmark. No doubt it was one of the things that drew him to *The Man With One Red Shoe.* He describes the film as encompassing three different looks: drama, suspense and comedy. What else could result when a story is based on the premise that even the most innocent person can appear guilty?

Tom Hanks plays the part of a concert violinist whose friend, Jim Belushi, has a penchant for practical jokes. Belushi's wife, played by Carrie Fisher, would trade all the jokes for Hanks as a lover. When Hanks gets off a plane from Chicago wearing one red shoe and one brown one – the result of a Belushi prank – he is chosen as the perfect patsy for a couple of warring CIA biggies, Charles Durning and Dabney Coleman. Add to that the beauti-

ful spy with a heart of gold, Lori Singer, and the comedic possibilities are practically endless. The film is actually an American adaptation of the French comedy *The Tall Blond Man with One Black Shoe.* It was produced by Victor Drai and directed by Stan Dragoti.

But there is a serious side to making a funny film. Kline's answer to the standard question "What was your greatest challenge on this film?" reveals the range of cinematic concerns facing someone in his shoes – even if they match: "The challenge on this film was to satisfy a major studio – a major producing organization – that the footage we were getting was acceptable for comedy. This was a unique endeavor because of the combination of elements. There are a lot of exhibitors that work with a producing organization that expect when they see a comedy to see a really fully lit film.

"I can't say they are wrong, but I remember way back working with a very famous cinematographer who was my idol, Charley Lang. Lang proved to me many years ago when he did a film called *Some Like It Hot* that a comedy does not have to be shot in the style of 'I Love Lucy' or 'Laverne and Shirley' to be comedic. And I am not saying that in a derogatory way.

"He shot a very interesting looking film. And it's a classic illustration of what a comedy can look like. I did something similar in a film I shot called *All of Me.* I didn't go overly dramatic – just enough to make the people look interesting, situations look real and not overly lit. I feel that this film – *The Man With One Red Shoe* – went even deeper into the dramatic/suspense area and still remained comedy."

It is quite a challenge to get a single cohesive film out of a series of totally improbable events encompassing three distinct filmic styles. (A good analogy might be a piece of classical music that identifies the good, the bad, the beautiful, the funny and the sad each with a special theme.) Kline says: "First of all on the comedic end: you do want to see it all. Nothing should be left to the imagination. Suspense almost speaks for itself. There is a type of lighting – usually less full – and angle that lend themselves to suspense visuals." Dramatic scenes tend to be more evenly lit.

Hanks in mirrored love scene.* Left: *Singer in mirror scene.* Opposite page: *Coleman and Singer in projection room scene.

Each of the characters can also be announced by the way he or she is lit. Comments Kline, "This is meant to be a very beautiful picture with beautiful people and the cosmetic aspect of the picture has a very important function. The beautiful people have to look good and they have to look interesting. There are no real ogres in this film, but there are characters that are caricatures. So in our approach we don't try to distort – only enhance – whatever the character's look is supposed to be."

Sometimes the line between the comedic and the dra-

matic is blurred. It takes experience and instinct to know how to make the distinction. "Comedy has to be seen. There are a lot of sight gags in this so we didn't go too deep. You can't go too harsh in tonal quality either or the comedy will be lost. That is the delicate area . . . perhaps with light and highlighting the comedic area within the frame, more so than you would if it were drama. In drama you might let it fall off in density a little more. Sometimes color values have a bearing on it, too. An environment or a prop can contain a certain color that the eye will pick up more readily than just blending in with the set. So the choices are made with art direction, too.

"I most certainly use color to change the mood of scenes. But there is no formula. It is just a matter of conceptual preplanning that I incorporate in all my films. I should say I have seen films that are frame-to-frame masterpieces, but after awhile it becomes boring. I like variety in a film and this film calls for variety. It's a question of visually pacing the film, and this is done beforehand so that you know how the linkages work before getting to them. Then you know there will be a variety.

"And no matter what you do, lenses have a bearing. Sometimes you might want to compress a scene by using a longer focal length, or you might use a wide angle where you want to see around people. The height of the lens is important, too. You reach for a ceiling and give a scene a little more drama or you might want just the opposite – that, too, is more of a feeling than something I can put into words. The choice of lenses is usually done 'at the moment.'"

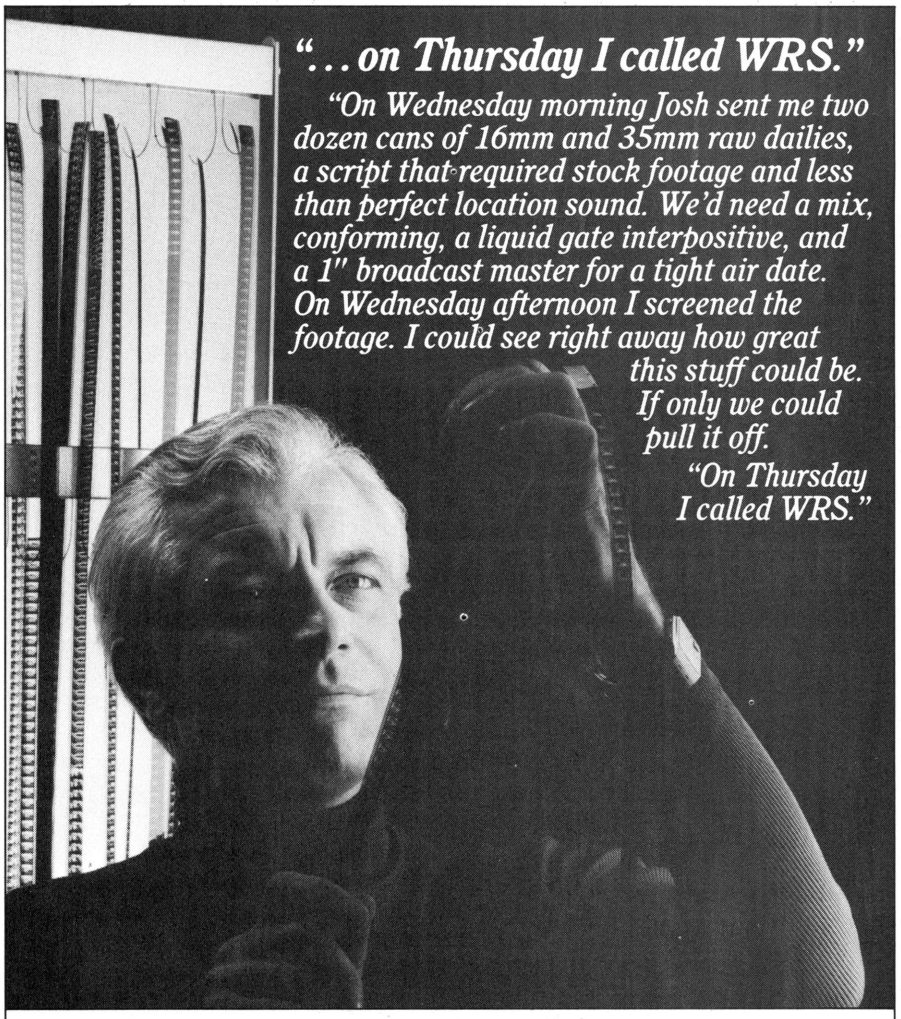
A good example of Kline's style for this film is the underground headquarters of CIA bad guy Dabney Coleman. It resembles the interior of a submarine except for the strange array of computers and surveillance devices. The lighting comes mainly from below a steel floor grate with a minimum of fill light for the players and no light from above. The scenes shot in here are very contrasty with a lot of strange shadows to underscore the suspense and the evil. However, in scenes involving the very beautiful Lori Singer along with Coleman, Kline took pains to keep Singer looking as glamorous as possible. "It was a go-for-broke situation. The key light was below and we were going after a very contrasty look. The hard shadows made the heavies look more menancing, but I altered the light source for the girl and used less acute angles so she

would look very pretty."

The scene in the projection room is another example of Kline's stylistic lighting. Everyone is gathered together to watch slides of Hanks taken by the surveillance teams. Everything is cleverly rigged so that the projector itself appears to be the main light source. Kline said, "I keyed off the projection screen and balanced everything from the screen back. I also matched my fill lights to the activity of the projector. When the projector light changed, the lights on the people changed."

The artistry of Kline and director Dragoti combined in the composition of the various shots. Every frame was full of people or action. Although the film was shot on location in Los Angeles, Long Beach and Washington, D.C., no time is wasted in "pulling back to reveal" skylines, no heads in cars with scenery flowing past – the emphasis is on the story points. Perhaps the best example of the tight composition is the opening sequence. Originally, the company was to shoot it on location in some African port. Later the decision was made to use Long Beach and through careful framing there is very little to give away location. The opening sets the style for the rest of the film. "We did that in order to tell the story as rapidly as possible and to increase the suspense," comments Kline. The result is a very fast-paced film.

The interior of the house in which our hero has an apartment and the apartment itself changes to meet the demands of the specific scene. Sometimes it is brightly lit and at other times full of shadows. Of course, part of the reason for the changing light is to reflect the passage of time. But, here too, Kline gives the visuals a little twist. Late in the film, friend Belushi comes to Hank's apartment determined to kill him. Instead he finds two bodies on the floor. And in classic comedic style, he continues to see bodies in different parts of the apartment, but he is the only one who does. To emphasize the fact that Belushi seems to be cracking up, Kline tilts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the camera just a little and exaggerates the angles.

Finally, there is the long awaited encounter between Singer and Hanks. It takes place in a very special apartment. There is a mirrored wall in every room and behind the mirrors is a gallery composed of Coleman and his henchmen. The camera moves from one side of the glass to the other as the action progresses. For the scene of Coleman and company leering in at Singer and Hanks, Kline put layers of neutral density where the mirror should be and cut down the brightness rather than shooting through a one way mirror. On the other hand, shots from the other side had to include a true mirror. "A mirror limits you in some ways," says Kline. "You have to be careful about light placement and you have to keep the camera out of the mirror. The room had a ceiling, but I lit the room using very small, low density lights rather than lighting from overhead."

Perhaps because Kline feels that much of what he does is instinctive, he finds it difficult to elaborate on the specifics of shooting a particular scene. He is less reticent about the general role of the cinematographer. "I enjoy what I do very much," he said. "I consider myself a combination artist/technician. I think that is what photography is. If you were just one and not the other you would be in trouble. A surgeon is really an artist too, but he has tools he works with that require technical skills. So it's a question of combining technical knowledge and artistry.

"As an example, a lot of special effects are really achieved by enhancing something that is unreal. But you can't make it appear unreal. So whether you use color, light or dark, or some other means, you either have to go overboard or underplay to make your statement. That is the point where artistry and technology join one another. That's when you can achieve an effect." The artist knows what techniques to use to make the unreal appear real.

"Artistry is something you are born with. At least I think that you are born with certain instincts. Either you develop them or they just go by the wayside. I've learned by working with other people but I was born with certain instincts. Those instincts have been enhanced by experience and honed by good or bad traits – both other cinematographers and other artists. It's the artistry that counts, but we achieve our artistry through technology."

Kline continues, "I have studied artists too, and what they do in a painting. They will accentuate a certain area and they may do it with color or light or dark. We do the same thing with photography. We give it angles or perspective, depth of focus of lack of depth of focus, or it could be two-dimensional or three-dimensional." There are many ways of doing things. Technology, old and new, just increases the options.

"As an example of new technology versus old technology on this film – we used the Louma crane and it worked sensationally for us. I would say the Louma is new technology. Old technology? We used the oldest arcs, which I rarely use, but in this case we wanted to get a very crispy look. These arcs are probably 40 years old and very few studios have them. So there is the old technology. It's a matter of keeping up with what is available. Day to day I learn and I am continually looking for the newest of innovations to help me achieve something even greater than before or more efficiently than I have before.

"In the various films that I do, I lock myself into the preconceived feel of the film we are approaching. By *we*, I mean the people making the film. I feel all film is a collaborative effort – a group of people making the same film. It is when we don't make the same film that we are in trouble. I think in this case, with *The Red Shoe*, we were all making the same film. I never doubted that." △

Nora Lee is a Los Angeles free lance writer with experience in special effects production.

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Couldn't wait for sunlight

That's Steve Poster talking. He was Director of Photography on *The Boy Who Could Fly,* shot on location in Vancouver. "At the end of that day the carnival rides were going to leave and the Skycam was booked for another job. There wasn't time to build towers and rig arcs."

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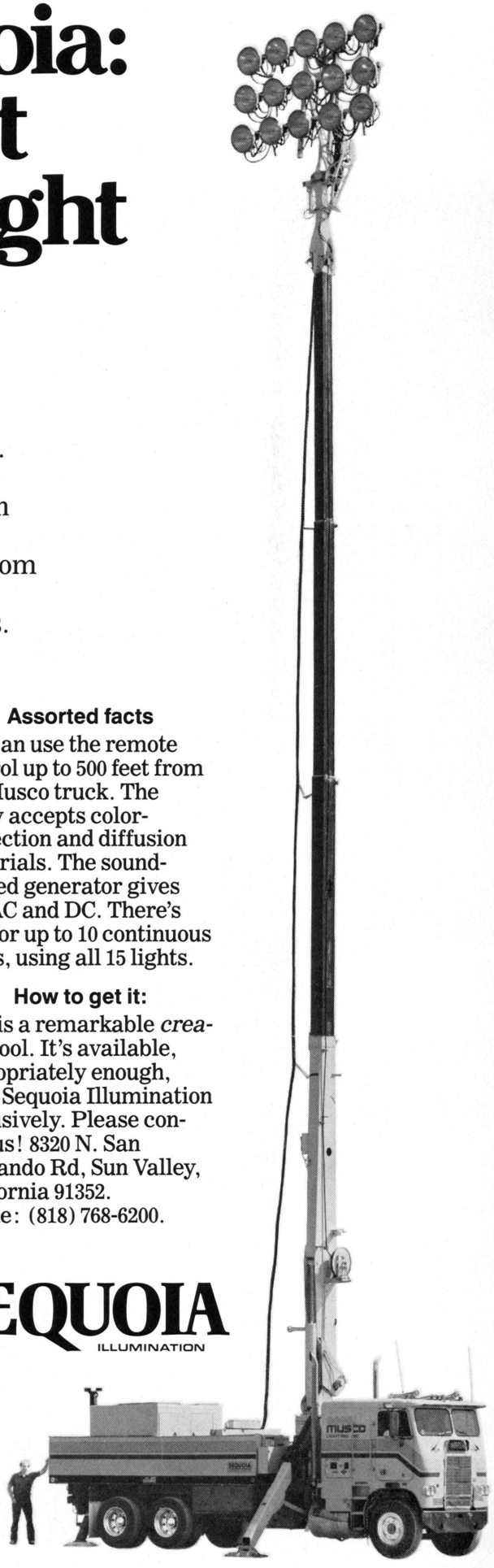


Fun, Games and

by Michael H. Price and George Turner

The curiously productive misadventures of its filming, a distinctive avoidance of formula in its telling, and a wealth of visual sweep and musical exploration combine to make *Crime Without Passion* more than an entertainment to cherish. Richly imaginative throughout and laced with an irony only life can approximate, the film attests to the brilliance of its sires and acknowledged makers, Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. The two had become pre-eminent in journalism, popular literature, and scripting for stage and screen.

Its under-credited artistry-by-committee, however, involving the often overwhelming contributions of such professionals as Lee Garmes, ASC, Slavko Vorkapich, and Leo Lippe, ASC, is a testament to a manipulative gift at which the producers excelled. Like cartoonist Walt Disney, performing artists Count Basie and Bob Wills, and the ambitious Howard Hughes, Hecht and MacArthur possessed a motivational *chutzpah* with which to rally exceptionally creative types and provoke from them superior efforts.

Next to Laurel and Hardy, the funniest team in pictures was that of Hecht and MacArthur. Having decided to produce and direct their own movies after a long string of successes, they set up shop in the summer of 1934 at I.S.S.I.-Eastern Service Studio (the former Paramount Eastern Studio at Astoria, Long Island, and today site of the new Kaufman Astoria Studios Center) and struck an independent production deal with Paramount Pictures. Their first and best effort, *Crime Without Passion*, was no great success with the public but instantly built an enormous critical reputation for artistry. Then *The Scoundrel* (1935) starred Noel Coward in another critics' darling which also was cold-shouldered at the boxoffice. *Once in a Blue Moon* (1936) sank with hardly a ripple, and *Soak the Rich* (1936) was no money maker. A fifth script, *The Monster*, was shelved until 1940, when Paramount filmed it as *The Mad Doctor* (with Basil Rathbone in a role written for Noel Coward) – but without screen credit to Hecht and MacArthur.

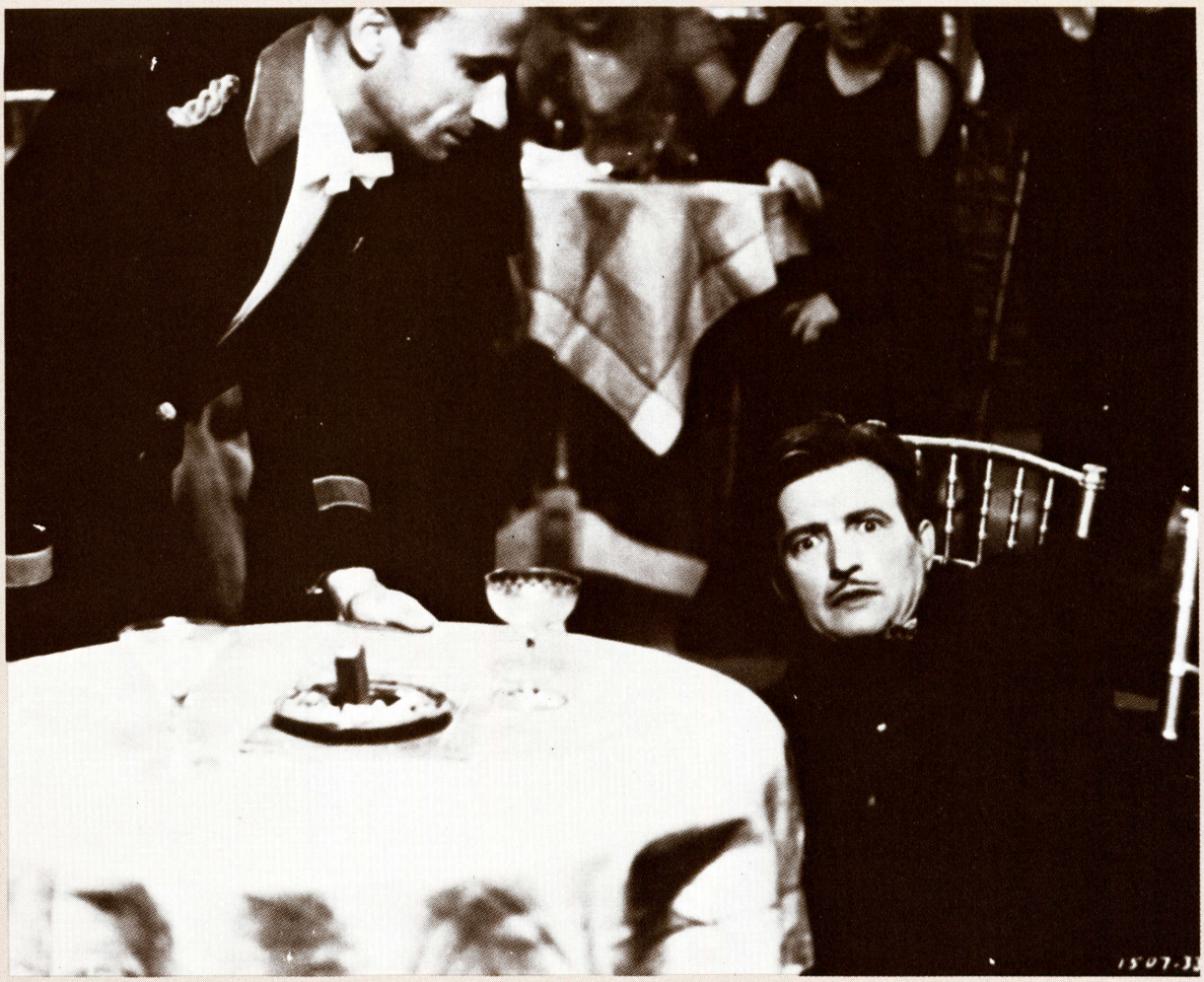
"The secret of good film production," Hecht remarked when *Crime Without Passion* went into production, "is that pictures should first of all amuse their own brainparents. What makes so many important-looking productions so heavy, stodgy and mechanical is the fact that the cast and technical staff worked like dogs in making them. People don't want to feel an atmosphere of tension when they go to the theater, they want to play. Well, we're going to play with them."

Claude Rains was a veteran stage actor who had just achieved screen stardom in his first picture, *The Invisible Man* (1933). Hecht and MacArthur saw Rains portraying a criminal lawyer in the Broadway play, *They Shall Not Die*. Inviting Rains to the home of MacArthur, which was made especiallly pleasant by the presence of Mrs. MacArthur, the distinguished actress Helen Hayes, the team read him their script. They asked him to play Lee Gentry – the self-styled "champion of the damned," a defense attorney who has saved 30 murderers from the electric chair only to become his own first casualty.

"It's beautifully written," Rains replied, "and it has everything an actor could ask for." He accepted the role in spite of a pinch-penny salary, so pleasing the authors that they beefed up the role with more dialogue and business. Many years later, toward the end of a distinguished career, Rains chose Gentry for his segment in the "The Role I Liked Best" series in the *Saturday Evening Post*.

Money could not buy a better impersonation than Rains visited upon Gentry. "The only crime punishable by law is stupidity," he snaps upon having saved another killer from execution. Privately involved with two women who represent an intractable conflict – Whitney Bourne as a gorgeous blonde socialite and the seductive Margo as cabaret dancer Carmen Browne – Gentry fends off a jealous attack by the

Opposite: ***Claude Rains decides that he needs an alibi in a hurry after a violent argument with Margo.*** **Above:** ***The main title is formed as animated shards of glass gather.***



Rains has just been slugged by his rival in Garmes' $20 night club set.

jilted Carmen, striking her an evidently fatal blow. Subduing his panic, Gentry undertakes to cinch an alibi. His alibi is undermined by a former lover, played by Greta Grandstedt, whose escort, Stanley Ridges, is killed by Gentry before a club packed with witnesses. No sooner have the police arrived to take Gentry away, than he sees Carmen – whom his blow had only stunned – walk onto the dance floor. Humiliated by publicity, Gentry attempts suicide but is stopped, left to fall prey to his own definition of "the only crime punishable by law."

The madcap authors of this compelling scenario recruited Lee Garmes, the genial young cinematographer who had most recently gained praise for *Shanghai Express* and *Zoo in Budapest*, on the strength of the argument that even though shooting their picture would mean a substantial drop in salary, it would enhance his prestige. They even offered him a co-director credit if he would accept a further salary cut, but here he refused.

"Nothing I ever encountered in the movies was as uniquely talented as the eyes of Lee Garmes," Hecht said many years later.

"We had a wonderful partnership," Garmes recalled less than a year before his death (1978). "Financially, it hurt me, but professionally, it helped me." The partnership was continued through *The Scoundrel* and *Once in a Blue Moon*. After MacArthur's death, Garmes and Hecht co-directed and co-produced three artistic but unpopular pictures: *Angels Over Broadway* (1940), *Spectre of the Rose* (1946) and *Actors and Sin* (1952).

Albert R. Johnson, a top Broadway stage designer, was hired to do the sets. Unfamiliar with the needs of the cinema, in which only those elements of a scene that fall within the angle viewed by the lens are considered, Johnson built each set to fill a stage, with high ceilings and vast floor space – "The bedroom was 40 feet wide," Garmes chuckled. Garmes and a carpenter hastily rebuilt the sets, mostly in small, portable sections much as William Cameron Menzies had done in 1929 for the pacesetting *Bulldog Drummond*.

The courtroom was done in this way, with all the elements mounted on wheels. Although this meant dispensing with the usual establishing long shot of the room, it proved a highly practical, money-saving approach. The judge's bench, the jury box, the witness stand, a piece of wall, a window, and the attorneys' tables were used in turn. As the scenes using each portion were finished, the section was wheeled out of

the way, the next section was rolled into place and the lighting was adjusted.

Garmes had studied the lighting of Rembrandt paintings in his earliest days as a cinematographer, striving to duplicate the distinctive north light effects of the great painter. Instead of utilizing the backlighted effects favored by most cameramen when working in black and white, he strove to maintain a consistent north light effect in which significant details are highlighted while other details are minimized. This effect is particularly successful in the courtroom scenes, lending verisimilitude to the sections to make them seem parts of the whole.

The company soon ran short of money and one of the more important sets had not been budgeted. Garmes and the carpenter spent $20 on draperies and cellophane and built a small stage, moved in some tables and chairs, utilized shadows and smoke and a handful of players. Somehow, in Garmes' shots, these odds and ends appear to be a convincing typical New York night spot.

The producers came to depend more and more upon Garmes' expertise, having him direct more than half the scenes. Sometimes either or both directors were on the set, quietly observing or even indulging in a game of cards. Usually, they told the actors in advance how they wanted the dialogue played, then wandered away and left the actual direction up to Garmes. Although the crew was on stage each morning at nine, the producer-director team never started work before 11:30. They often communicated by means of large signs stuck on the walls of their office. A typical sign from MacArthur to Hecht: "What was the audience doing ALL that time?" This meant that yesterday's scene was dull and should be redone differently.

Even though Garmes had refused the salary cut requisite to receiving a co-director credit, the producers gave him a full frame credit that was unique at the time: Associate Director and Photographer.

Frank Tours, a Broadway composer-conductor (son of Berthold Tours, the Rotterdam composer and music educator, and grandson of Barthelmy Tours of the conservatories of Leipzig and Brussels), had charge of the score, a pleasingly strident work whose strategic use of orchestral dissonance and flatted thirds and sevenths of jazz – chiefly to depict the conflict between libertine abandon and the mounting hysteria of guilt – anticipates the much later scoring styles of Bernard Herrmann, Henry Mancini, Pete Rugolo and Lalo Schifrin. The jazz influence may be attributable to Oscar Levant, the age's principal interpreter of Gershwin's music, who was brought in to compose part of the score – and to his surprise received neither pay nor screen credit!

Some of the most unusual visuals result from the fascination Slavko Vorkapich held for the producers. The Yugoslavian-born "Vorky" already had distinguished himself as a portait photographer, writer, commercial artist, dance director, set designer (for Rex Ingram's *Scaramouche* and *Prisoner of Zenda*), director-photographer of short films, second unit director, and co-director of RKO's recent *The Past of Mary Holmes*. He had become a specialist in creating montage sequences for RKO, Paramount and MGM, adding spice to the likes of *Viva Villa, Dancing Lady* and *Manhattan Melodrama*. Later he would become a leader in the field of education, lecturing often at the Museum of Modern Art and serving as head of the film department at USC 1952-56. Although he died in 1976, his writings and theories are still widely studied and used.

Vorkapich was hired initially to make atmospheric shots and handle special effects. So impressed were Hecht and MacArthur with his ideas that they soon let him build up a second unit comprising a dozen players, a camera crew, a stunt pilot, soundmen, stage hands and stunt artists. Vorkapich's contributions are enormous, changing what would have been a gripping but stage bound murder yarn into a piece of cinematic virtuosity. As director of photography he acquired Leo Lippe, ASC, a New York-based special effects cameraman.

Most noteworthy is the opening sequence, a pre-title prologue which Vorkapich described as "The Furies rising from the blood of victims of passion and flying over New York, laughing at the lovers." A close-up of a woman's eye dissolves to a matching gun muzzle. Flash cuts show the eye twitching, the gun firing, the eye blinking in pain, the victim's POV (out of focus) of the smoking gun in the killer's hand, a woman falling (slow motion), and an extreme closeup of a drop of blood splatting to the floor. One by one the three Furies of Greek legend – diaphanously gowned, voluptuous women with hideously evil faces – fly up from the blood and into the spaces above New York City. They plunge and swoop among the man-made canyons, each in turn diving down to witness a different scene of guilty passion. Sometimes they seem to fly into the camera's lens.

Key personnel confer between takes at Astoria: Arthur Ellis (cutter), Garmes, Hecht and MacArthur.

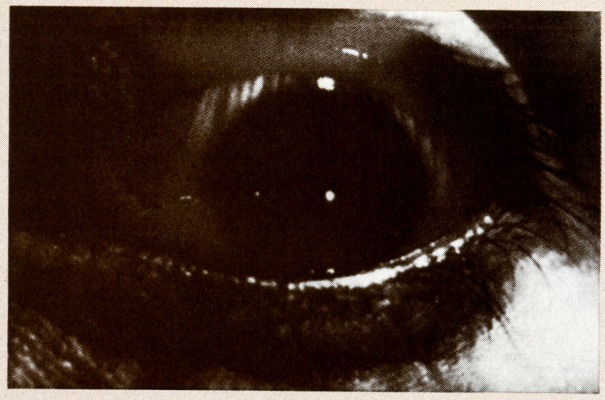
Laughing fiendishly, they smash windows and skylights. The falling shards of glass, through adroit stop-frame work, fall to the floor and form the letters of the main title! (The credit titles appear at the end of the picture. Although pre-title prologues and end credits titles are common today, they were highly unusual at the time.)

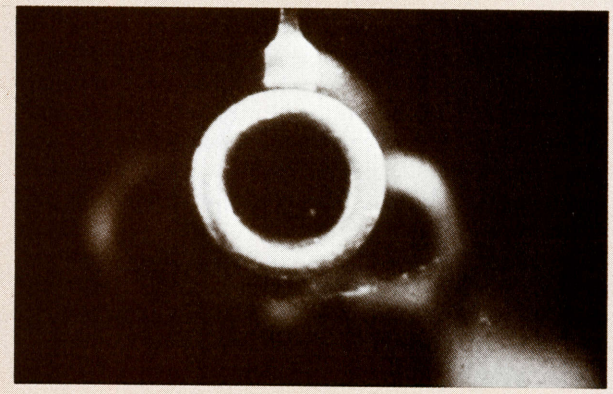
The Furies were portrayed by three beautiful professional dancers – Betty Sundmark, Fraye Gilbert and Dorothy Bradshaw – whose faces were painted garishly. They performed on a platform covered with black velvet. A wind machine whipped their hair and the filmy gowns which somewhat concealed their bodies. To make them rise from the blood, the camera moved down past them from a 45° angle as they rose from a crouching position and the shot was superimposed over the drop of blood. The "flying" scenes were made with the players strapped into concealed leather corsets attached to piano wires. Suspended high in the air in front of black velvet backdrops, the players were buffeted by a wind propeller to keep their hair and gowns flapping. These shots later were superimposed over moving and stationary shots of New York City buildings. Some background shots were made from an airplane piloted by a young woman stunt flier, Swanee Taylor.

The more spectacular diving scenes for all three Furies were made by a pretty circus aerialist, Mickey King. These leaps – 45 feet into a net – were all done in one day. Remarkably, the artist had just emerged from the hospital where she had been for nine weeks after a rigging collapsed during a stage show. She fell to the stage, suffering a brain concussion and fractures of the skull, back and shoulder.

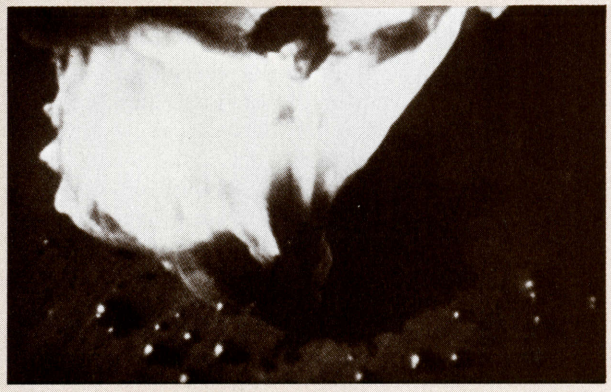
Vorkapich and Lippe took a crew to shoot some exteriors of the J. P. Morgan Building at 23 Wall Street as part of their montage. They arrived before dawn on a Sunday morning in order to avoid crowds, and found the streets deserted, as they had hoped. A night watchman, seeing them unpack their equipment, decided he was about to the burglarized. As dawn broke and Lippe was about to start shooting, the company was besieged by the police.

Lippe was a little-known but highly qualified cinematographer who usually worked anonymously behind the scenes in the days when only department heads occasionally received billing for special effects. Born in Brooklyn in 1899, he had been in the business for about 15 years at the time of *Crime Without Passion*. He was assistant to Roy Pomeroy, ASC, special effects chief at Paramount's Hollywood studios, until 1928, when he was put in charge of the effects department at Paramount-Astoria. There he worked on *Nothing But the Truth, Cocoanuts, The Hole in the Wall, Jealousy, Applause, The Return of Sherlock Holmes, Roadhouse Nights*, and others until the studio closed in 1930. He then shot 16 travelogs for Cinelog and 13 Musical Moods shorts for ERPI, as well as other short films made in New York, before joining the Vorkapich unit. Later, he became a designer and manufacturer of motion picture cameras and equipment and vice-president of Cineflex Corporation. During World War II he made a bomb-spotting 35mm movie camera for the Air Force. He moved to San Antonio after retiring and died there in 1969.





Vorkapich also directed several straight dramatic scenes, and brought the Furies back to laugh viciously at Gentry's plight at the finale. Lippe made a number of highly original – and much imitated – scenes in which Rains was able to express his thoughts: a ghostly double exposure of the actor prompts, chides and advises the flesh-and-blood Rains as he plunges into his "perfect" crime. This technique is a marked improvement over the stage's cliche of asides to the audience, which was tried (disastrously) by MGM in their version of Eugene O'Neill's play, *Strange Interlude* (1932). Garmes also photographed that one, which he called "very dull."



Several frames from the Furies prologue designed by Vorkapich and photographed by Lippe. Certain images, such as the laughing skull, are intercut in segments ranging from two to five frames in length. (Courtesy of Bob Birchard)

Most of the players were new to the screen. In his only previous screen venture, Rains portrayed *The Invisible Man*, whose face wasn't seen until the last shot in the picture, after the character's death. His third picture bore the appropriate title, *The Man Who Reclaimed His Head* (1934). Margo – Marie Castillo y O'Donnell, and later Mrs. Eddie Albert – was a 17-year-old Mexican-born nightclub dancer who had never acted professionally. (Margo Albert, a strong civic leader in Los Angeles, died July 17, 1985, while this article was in preparation.)

Whitney Bourne was just what she played in the picture – a New York socialite with some minor stage experience. Stanley Ridges – excellent in his talkie debut as the man who goads Rains into a blood rage – was a Theatre Guild actor who had previously appeared in only one film. Leslie Adams, Paula Trueman, Greta Grandstedt, Fuller Mellish, Esther Dale, Ralph Riggs, Lionel Pape, and Charles Kennedy were stage actors, several of whom had some screen experience. The other cast members consisted of dancers, models, singers, and even circus performers. Twelve members of the Bobby Duncan Dance Troupe and 16 dancers from the New York Hollywood Restaurant floor show appear in dressing room and dance floor scenes.

The cast was bolstered with celebrity bit players such as Helen Hayes and Fannie Brice. Hecht and MacArthur cast themselves fairly prominently as a pair of obnoxious, pushy reporters.

"New players are the only ones who are really natural, except for the really great screen players," MacArthur explained. "Besides, how many geniuses have we in America? Don't answer – you might not include me."

Above: ***Garmes explains the camera mechanism to Alice Jefferson, a dancer in the film.*** **Below:** ***Garmes, genial veteran of scores of notable films.***

The only casualties among the players were severe cases of motion sickness suffered by all three "Furies" and a bruised cheek for Rains. The latter was the result of being slapped 19 times in the course of rehearsals and takes for the scene in which Ridges goads Rains in the night club. The directors called for several takes on each of three setups – long shot, medium shot and closeup – while insisting that Ridges make each blow "more realistic." Ridges, apologizing after each take was unnerved by the experience.

Except for the screeching Furies, the actors perform in a subdued manner considering the period and the subject. Rehearsals, Garmes recalled, were conducted "almost in whispers," with the voices "raised only a trifle" when the actual takes began. "The reason for this restraint is that intense emotion doesn't have to be stressed," Hecht said.

Despite the strangeness of its production methods, the picture was finished in only 28 days, a benchmark of inventiveness and the effective blending of many artistic visions. Aside from its unusual photographic treatment, *Crime Without Passion* is memorable chiefly for Rains. He incurs audience dislike with his arrogance and yet makes one hope he will not get caught. He appears in almost every scene, always photographed in a manner that at once emphasizes his diminuitive stature and conveys his naturally commanding presence. His dissolution from consummate confidence, to bravado, to a state of cowering, and the camera's pitiless depiction thereof, propel the story to an inexorable climax. △

Michael Price is arts critic of the Fort Worth Star Telegram.

Crime Without Passion

A Paramount Release

A Hecht-MacArthur *production; produced at I.S.S.I. Studios, Long Island; Western Electric sound system; written, directed and produced by* Ben Hecht *and* Charles MacArthur; *associate director and photographer,* Lee Garmes, ASC; *special effects by* Slavko Vorkapich; *musical score composed and arranged by* Frank Tours; *general manager,* Arthur Rosson; *scenery,* Albert Johnson; *film editor,* Arthur Ellis; *recorded by* Joseph Kane; *photographic effects,* Leo Lippe, ASC; *assistant to Vorkapich,* Leslie Bain; *effects cutter,* Elvira Trabert; stunt supervisor, Swanee Taylor; *additional music,* Oscar Levant. *Running time, 80 minutes. Released August 24, 1934.*

Lee Gentry, Claude Rains; *Carmen Browne,* Margo; Katy Costello, *Whitney Bourne; Eddie White,* Stanley Ridges; *Buster Malloy,* Paula Trueman; *State's Attorney O'Brien,* Leslie Adams; *Della,* Greta Grandstedt; *Miss Keely,* Esther Dale; *Lieutenant Norton,* Charles Kennedy; *Judge,* Fuller Mellish; *Foreman,* Lionel Pape; *The Furies,* Betty Sundmark, Fraye Gilbert, Dorothy Bradshaw; *Acrobat,* Mickey King; *Model,* Ethelyne Holt; *Man,* Ralph Riggs; *Dancers,* Alice Jefferson, Alice Anthon; *Reporters,* Ben Hecht, Charles MacArthur; *Women in Lobby,* Helen Hayes, Fannie Brice; *Dance Troupes,* the Bobby Duncan Dancers, the New York Hollywood Restaurant Dancers.

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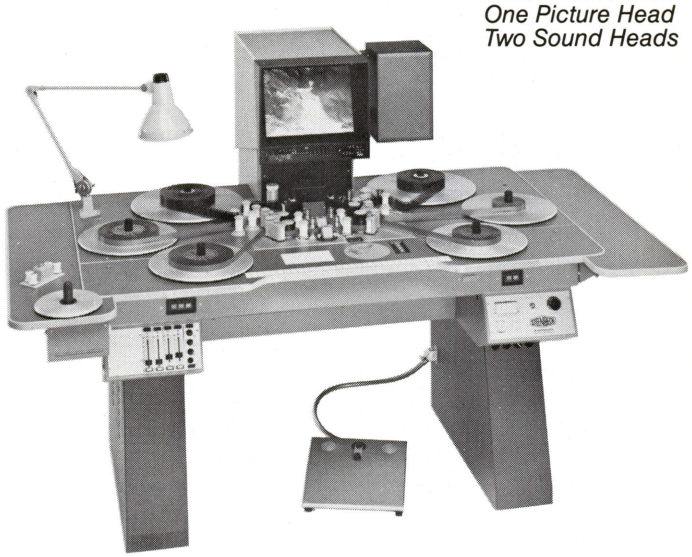

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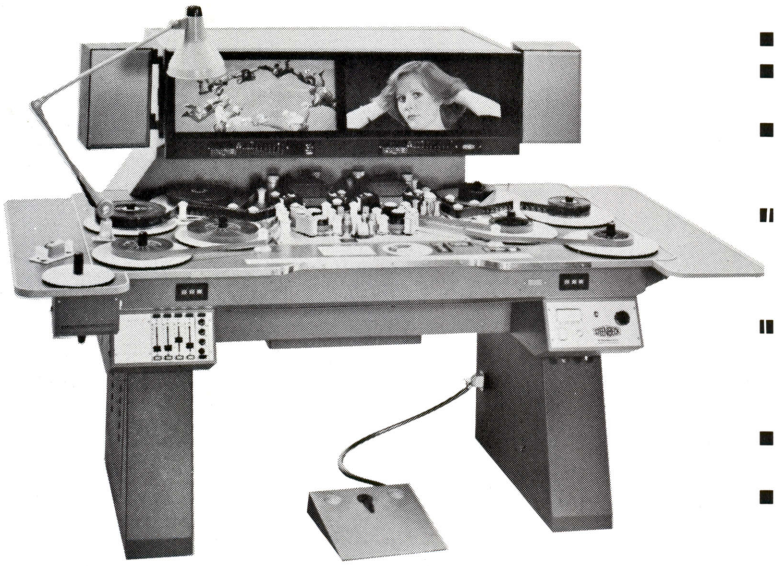

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Photos by Tony Dunne

Landscape With Waitress: a Challenge

Produced by David Massar
Directed by Jeffrey Townsend
Photographed by Michael Ballhaus

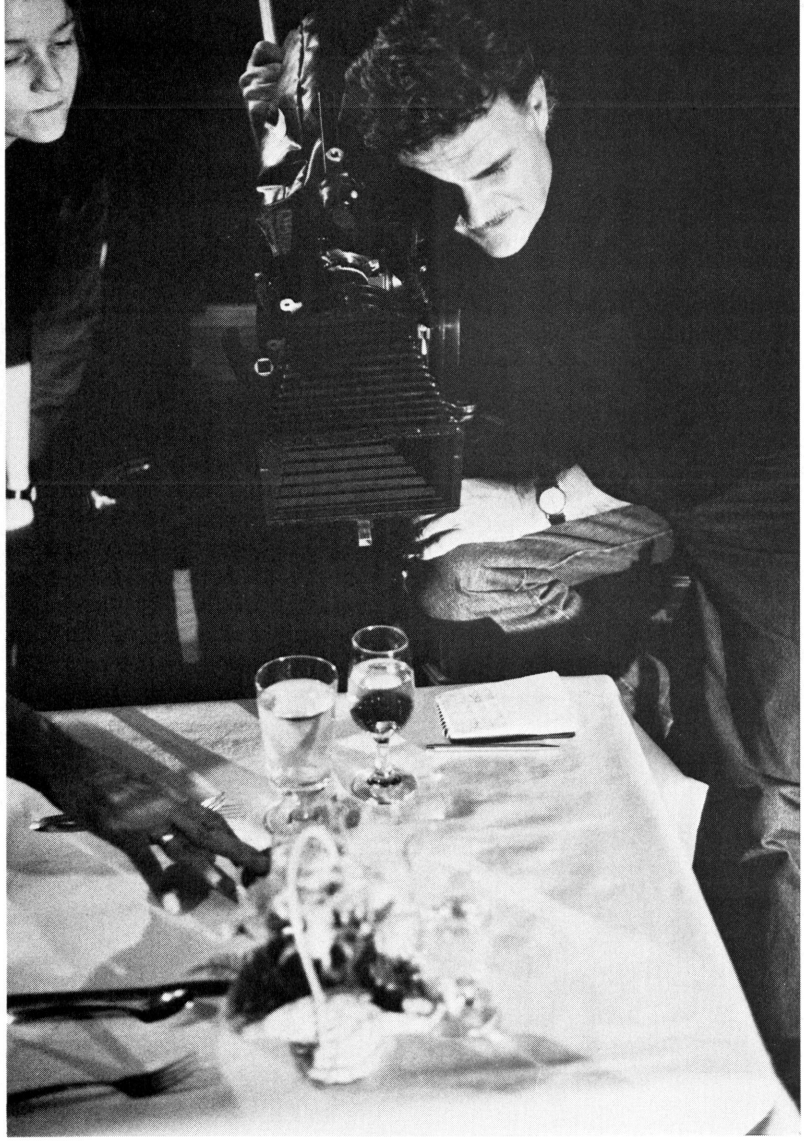
by Gregor Kino

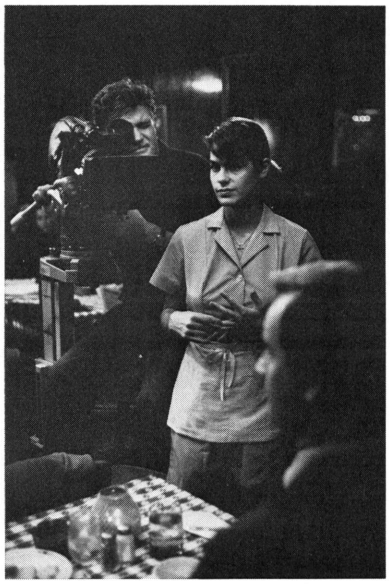
Landscape With Waitress is a darkly comic fable that follows the unexpected contours of one lonely man's imagination, as he privately surveys the landscape of his life. At the moment, his horizons extend as far as the walls of a deserted greasy spoon on Manhattan's West Side. Deserted, that is, except for one companion: his waitress. And she doesn't even know he's alive ... Or does she?

A popular one-act play by Robert Pine, *Landscape With Waitress* could well be considered a cameraman's nightmare: How do you make a film about a guy who sits at a table and thinks out loud for half an hour? And never gets out of his chair? So there was *My Dinner With André,* but even that had *two* guys, unlike "*My Dinner With No One,*" to borrow cinematographer Michael Ballhaus' pet name for this project.

It seems the task fell to one of Germany's most prestigious cameramen, the man who shot 15 of the late R. W. Fassbinder's films (including *The Marriage of Maria Braun*). In the United States he has lent his considerable talent to the likes of Martin Scorsese (on his forthcoming *After Hours*), John Sayles (*Baby It's You*), James Foley (*Reckless*), Marisa Silver (*Old Enough*), Bobby Roth (*Heartbreakers*), and Volker Schlondorff (on a film version of Dustin Hoffman's Broadway production of *Death of a Salesman*).

So what was Michael Ballhaus doing with his 16mm rig, his "tiny little Aaton" as he calls it, sweating it out in a diner on 12th





Opposite page: ***Waitress Nurit Koppel and customer John Rothman.*** **This page, clockwise:** ***First assistant Susan Starr watches as Ballhaus frames close-up. Townsend and Ballhaus discuss shot. Ballhaus frames Rothman over shoulder of Koppel. Crew on the set, from left: Starr, Ballhaus, Koppel, key grip Arthur Blum, soundman Tom Nelson and Townsend.***

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Avenue, when he could be resting on his laurels, and having a quiet evening at home with his lovely wife?

Ballhaus spends his time in New York in a townhouse situated in what could only be called a real-life jump cut: you walk off the busiest, noisiest corner in all of Greenwich Village, pass through a little tunnel, and come out into a courtyard. All of a sudden, you realize the soundtrack has dropped out: you're not in New York any more. Given the architecture and the semi-rustic tranquillity, you might guess you were in a suburb of Berlin. But there at the door is a man you'd sooner mistake for, say, Marcello Mastroianni, than for Robby Muller or Ed Lachman. The town also is home to his sons, Sebastian and Florian, his wife Helga, and their dog, Ernestine.

Ballhaus was enthusiastic about *Landscape with Waitress*. "The director of this little movie (Production Designer Jeffrey Townsend) is actually my oldest friend in America. He brought me into the industry in this country. We met when we shot (Peter Lilienthal's) *Dear Mr. Wonderful* together. He was preparing another movie called *Baby It's You*. He talked to the producers and the director, John Sayles, about me. They looked at the dailies and they liked my work and hired me." He grins for a moment, then becomes *very* serious. "It was all Jeffrey's fault," he says melodramatically. He laughs and says, "We promised to help each other as much as we can. We did five movies together, and I wanted to help Jeffrey to do this movie, to help him get started."

What a way to get started. The camera in *Landscape With Waitress* is like a satellite with a direct linkup to the main character's brain, relentlessly gliding around him, sweeping in for nuances of expression, crawling around behind him to see what he sees from over his shoulder, peering at what he pulls from a pocket.

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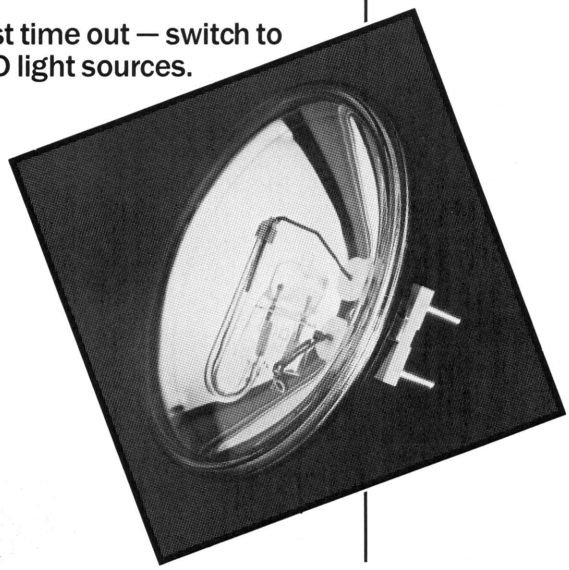

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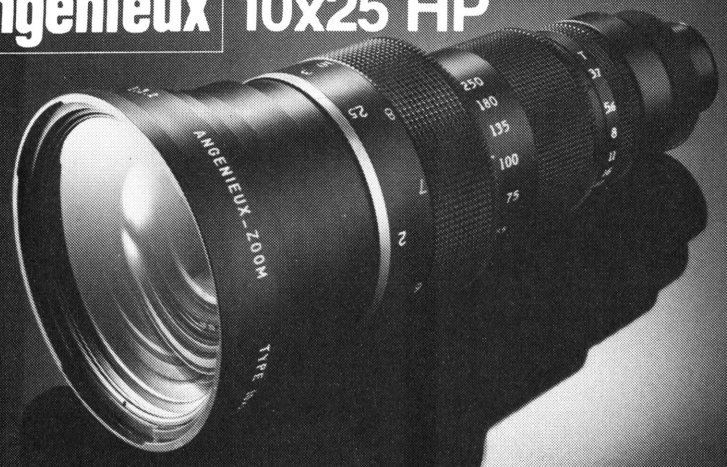

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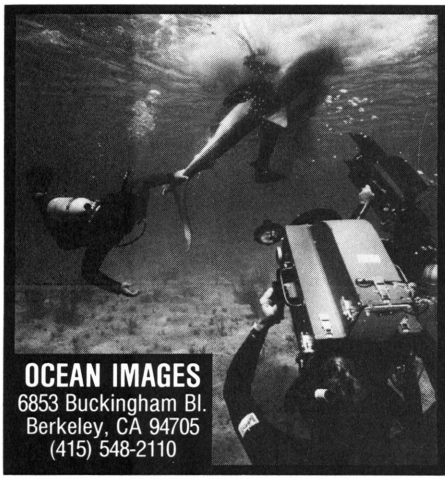

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How much of this, if any, was the result of winging it, just following what the actor did?

"Jeffrey and I were actually, like always, well prepared," Ballhaus explains. "We had a storyboard, and we knew exactly what we wanted to shoot. We had a lot of dolly shots in this little movie. The most important thing when we looked at the location was that the floor was smooth enough that we could do all these shots with an Elemack, without laying tracks or boards. That we could just track wherever we wanted. I think it's important when you have a scene that is kind of static, that you try to put your emotion into the moves with the camera, and move the camera as much as possible in the *right* way, in the *emotionally* right way."

The film has a warm, naturalistic look to it, achieved with a minimum of lights by taking advantage of Zeiss Superspeed lenses and 7294 stock. But there are several fantasy scenes, full-blown fabrications in which the central character gets to try out life with different versions of his waitress. It takes a second glance to realize that they're all taking place in the same restaurant; in fact, they're all taking place at the same *table*. The changes are made with lighting, and to a lesser degree, filters and even shooting styles.

"In the fantasy scenes we used a lot of filters to make it soft and pretty, more like TV. In the scene where he's the elegant guy, we made it look like it was this wonderful, perfect restaurant, all white and overexposed," he says, referring to the last and most striking transformation of the diner. It suddenly becomes the setting for a decidedly Upper East Side marital spat, and looks like those chic, noisy places where Bloomingdale's ladies would meet for lunch."

He tells how he did it:

"We just put tracing paper behind these dividers and lit it from the back. It looked like a huge window. For the close-ups, we didn't have three walls like

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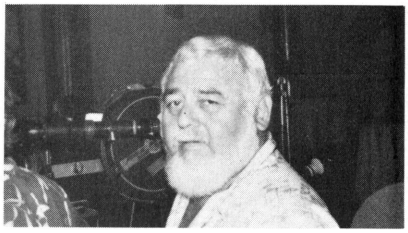

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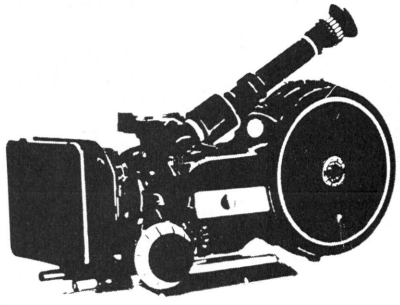

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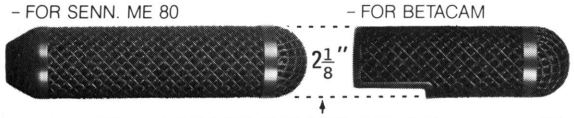

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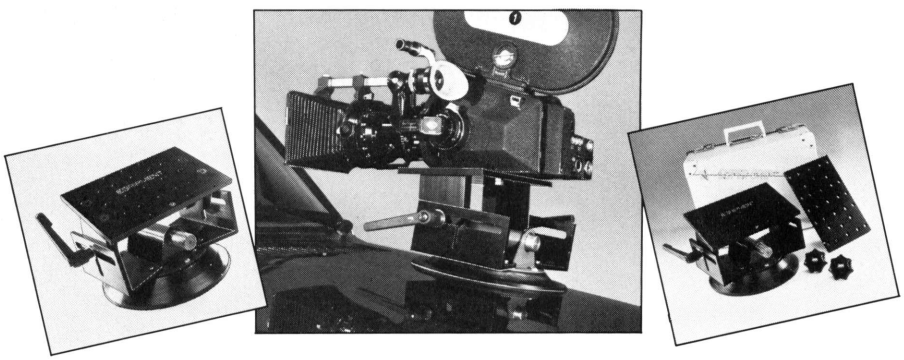

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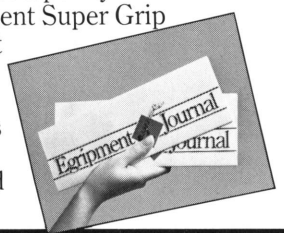

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that, so we just turned the actors and put them in front of the same background. It looks like the whole restaurant is like that," he says, obviously pleased with the simplicity and effectiveness of the solution.

Landscape was done very quickly (four days) and *very* cheaply (no one's telling). Did Ballhaus feel constrained by time, money or personnel?

"There were no restrictions, no way," he says, quick to lavish praise and credit on Arthur Blum, the key grip who kept the Elemack rolling, Morris Flam, who set the lights as gaffer, and Susan Starr, the camera assistant who pulled focus for Ballhaus. He also mentions Du Art's consistent processing and printing.

I wonder to myself if what I've heard is really true, that beneath this warm, giving, compassionate exterior, there lurks a warm, giving, compassionate man inside. I ask Ballhaus again what his motivation could have been, to take on a student-sized production in 16mm when he's obviously long past needing to add to his reel.

He smiles and speaks as though the answer couldn't be more obvious: "Friendship." △

Gregor Kino is a free-lance writer and movie buff living in New York City.

THE PROFESSIONALS

Donald McAlpine, ASC/ACS is a respected Director of Photography with over 30 film credits including: BREAKER MORANT, TEMPEST, MY BRILLIANT CAREER, HARRY AND SON and MOSCOW ON THE HUDSON.

We asked Mr. McAlpine to talk about his experiences using HMI lights.

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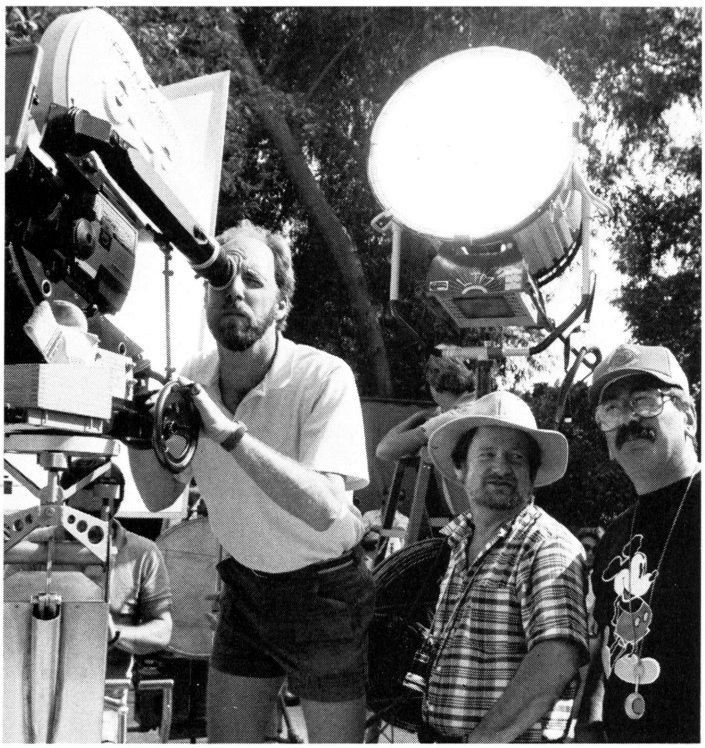
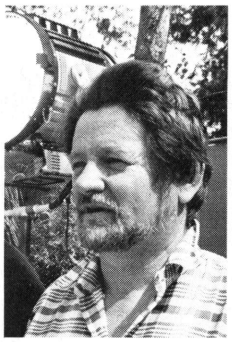


Donald McAlpine (center) with Jamie Anderson (Cameraman) and Norm Glasser (Gaffer) during filming of DOWN AND OUT IN BEVERLY HILLS.

"The reliability of HMIs has increased geometrically."



"In the early days, I always ordered 50% more lights than I required to cover breakdowns, but this is no longer necessary. During the shooting of my most recent film, DOWN AND OUT IN BEVERLY HILLS, all the HMI lights were from LTM, and there wasn't a single malfunction, that I am aware of."

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20 Years With National Geographic

Photos by Barry C. Bishop

Jerstad likened the feeling of viewing the world from Everest to sitting on the wing of an airplane at 25,000 feet. **Opposite Page:** ***Dangling by a thread from the top of the world, explorers bring back first motion picture from Mount Everest.***

by Nora Lee

"A documentary is like doing a piece of embroidery. You have all these pieces of thread of different textures and weights and colors and you can put them in the cloth any way you want. It means that the writer/producer (and cinematographer) has much more creative control than the maker of any other kind of film and that is fun! It is also an enormous responsibility and a challenge."

—Miriam Birch,
producer/writer
National Geographic Specials

Jerstad rests his wind-up Bell & Howell on ice axe at 29,028 feet above sea level.

The experiences of exploration have been recorded on plates and film by the National Geographic Society since its founding in 1888. The images began to move as early as 1903, when arctic pioneer Anthony Fiala presented his bioscope pictures of the far north to an appreciative Washington lecture audience. But it was not until the 1960s that the Society realized the full scientific and educational potential of the moving medium with which it has been identified ever since: television.

In 1963, funds were provided to film the three-team American assault on Mount Everest. The expedition represented the first ascent of Everest by the west ridge and produced the first motion pictures ever taken from the top of the world – 29,028 feet above sea level. Those pictures climaxed the very first National Geographic Special, "Americans on Everest." That was 20 years and 80-plus films ago.

"Comes a moment of truth when I feel like a little boy – humbled before this great mountain, knowing I am in the wrong place."

... Lute Jerstad,
photographer
"Americans on Everest"
(1965)

Everest expedition leader, Norman Dyhrenfurth, had put together a team of mountain climbers that he felt had the best chance of making it to the top. Lute Jerstad was one of them. They had trained for two years before setting out. Jerstad never imagined he would need cinematographic training as well.

"I was a mountain climber first and photographer second. I had never even taken motion pictures before, except for little home movies," recalled Lute Jerstad. "Dan Duty, who was the chief cinematographer on the Everest expedition [and shot much of the documentary footage up to 21,500 feet], could not acclimatize well and got thrombophlebitis – a blood clot – in his leg, which is usually fatal, especially at those altitudes. So he was out of the expedition. While he was recuperating at 21,500 feet he drew out about 14 different diagrams for Barry Corbet and I as to how to use the cameras, what kinds of things to shoot and how to shoot them. We went out and shot things and would come back and tell him what we had done. He would criticize it and tell us how we might be able to do things better. A real crash course.

"When we started out high, of course, we were on our own. The film looks good, but in all honesty, if you're struggling to get a camera up that high, whatever you take is going to look pretty spectacular as long as you get the right aperture setting."

The footage is spectacular, but not a total cinematic dream. There was no room for a tripod in the gear taken to the top of Everest; instead the camera was perched on Jerstad's axe. As he struggled to capture the panorama, the fur from his clothing obscured the lower part of the lens. "I used a wind-up Bell & Howell. The film was all siliconed so it wouldn't freeze but, I think I broke it three or four times. There is a small opening that you have to get your fingers on to change film, and finally my hands were frozen and I couldn't film anymore." Jerstad took no pictures on the way back down. Like the other members of the teams sent to the top, he suffered from severe frostbite. (Undeterred, Jerstad made 17 equally dangerous climbs in the succeeding years.)

"In order to accomplish something like that, you become very single-minded, and you push the rest of your life out. You are only looking at one thing, and that is taking the next step or getting to the next camp or getting to the top. That tremendous concentration – it is even more mental, I think than it is physical – allows

you to accomplish what you have to do.

"But it was a lot of fun, too. It's not always some horrendous thing going on, though it sounds like that sometimes. And it is beautiful. You sit down in one of those high camps and look out over the world below you, and it's like sitting on the wing of an airplane and cruising around at 25,000 feet.

"Looking back, I am very proud to have been involved in the first Geographic special ever made. Of course shooting the first motion pictures from the top of Everest ever was a kind of thrill, too. We were so busy on the top that I did not even remember what things looked like. It wasn't till the latter part of July that year when we were back at the Geographic – we had gotten medals from the President – that they showed the footage from the top and I started to cry. I really had never seen it before. I didn't really believe it had come out, but then I started to remember what it looked like . . . At the time, I was very busy."

Since that auspicious beginning, the National Geographic Society has called upon the talents and fostered the careers of the world's best documentarists. From the interior of the human body to a swim with a humpback whale, from the monuments to the might of Egyptian kings to stomping grounds of the grizzly bear, these people have gone to places few others have ever been. The documentary film, as Jerstad put it, has contributed a tremendous amount to popular appreciation of science and culture "just because of the immediacy of it. You can see things that take years and years to study and research. The average person would not have that much time in his lifetime to devote to the study of a single subject."

Jerstad is the exception in this collection of filmmakers. He is not a cinematographer or a producer or a writer or an editor. (At the time he made the climb to the top of the world he was a college professor teaching oriental theater history. Today he and his company – Jerstad Adventures – guide those with an adventurous spirit on various expeditions in places like Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Thailand.) Nevertheless, in sharing his experience with the rest of us, he joins an extraordinary group of artists who are passionately committed to the documentation of reality.

Equipped for survival rather than cinematography, members of team prepare for Everest assault.

The first National Geographic Specials were produced by David L. Wolper for CBS and it was Wolper's company that hired the cameramen. John Alonzo, ASC, an actor turned cameraman with three short films under his belt, managed to convince the management at Wolper Productions that he was destined to be a documentary photographer. After serving an apprenticeship under Vilis Lapenieks, ASC, and through the friendship and constant good advice of Floyd Crosby, ASC, Alonzo was able to move into the slot of director of photography for several Wolper documentaries. In 1966 he met producer/writer Irwin Rosten and together they brought a new chapter on grizzly bears to American audiences.

Photos by Lance Craighead

Above: ***The Drs. Craighead never knew how long the grizzlies would remain tranquilized. This series of photos shows that discretion is the better part of valor.***

"Sure there were dangerous moments, but you aren't aware of them until after the fact. If you really get involved in what you are doing – well, that is why it is a precarious profession at times. In the "Grizzly!" show, I was photographing from a distance a sow and her cubs. They started coming towards the camera and I was looking through the lens thinking, 'This is a great shot.' They were lumbering towards us and Dr. Craighead suddenly grabbed me and moved me and I was angry at him. I was shooting! He said, 'Up a tree!' I started to grab my equipment. He said to forget it and get moving. So I climbed the tree. The bear came up and she went "WHACK!" and tore a limb from the tree. According to the doctor, it missed my foot by about an inch-and-a-half. I was just concerned about my camera. I thought she would step all over it. Luckily she didn't, and soon she and the cubs moved away. The doctor was angry with me. 'Don't do that any more. I don't want to have to kill a bear to save you.'"

—John Alonzo, ASC
"Grizzly!" (1967)

Like all documentary films, "Grizzly!" required the ability to deal with the unexpected. In one very dramatic sequence a large bear, Number 36, had been drugged so that statistical information could be gathered and a transmitter placed around its neck. The bear started to recover a bit sooner than expected from the drug. It became apparent to Dr. Craighead (Frank and John Craighead are the twin brothers who headed the bear study), that he had to make a choice between risking more drugs and thus endangering the bear, or finishing up as quickly as possible and letting him go.

Alonzo, who was filming the entire process, saw great dramatic possibilities in the situation. He climbed on top of the pickup and told his wife Jan, also a competent photographer, to get in the station wagon. He added that as long as she was in there to get her camera ready and if the bear came towards her – roll 'em. To the amazement of the whole team, the bear struggled to his feet and charged the station wagon with the single-mindedness of a tank. Number 36 hit the door with enough force to leave the impression of his head. Then the bear, with admirable determination, attempted to climb through the windshield of the car. Jan Alonzo had her chance. She rolled camera and got some truly impressive footage.

There is some footage that didn't make it into the film according to John Alonzo: the doctors were screaming epithets, telling him to get in the truck. He refused and the combination of his shots and his wife's made for an astonishing display of the grizzly's raw power. Alonzo admitted, "We were very fortunate and very lucky that no one was hurt . . . but it made a good sequence."

Most documentaries are shot in 16mm because the equipment is less bulky and 16mm film is less expensive than 35mm. Expense of the film stock is an important consideration when a producer must budget for an average shooting ratio of 25:1 and a not-unheard-of ratio of 50:1. Alonzo recalled, "On 'Grizzly!' we were using very slow Ektachrome film that was later transferred to an internegative, and then prints were made from that. I believe it was 16 ASA. We were shooting with one of the first Eclairs. In fact, Vilis bought the very first one that came out. Wolper bought the second one and that's the one I used. We had a lot of troubles with it because it was a new baby. But we were able to make it work and I love the camera.

"I adapted a still lens called a Novaflex. It was a 640mm lens and also a 400mm lens. It had a gunstock-like trigger mechanism that made it great for wildlife. As you were following you could keep the animals in focus. We also had the first Angenieux lens – a 12-to-120 zoom – and it was always out of focus on the wide angle. We could never get it sharp. We almost always used it hand-held. I was more comfortable doing hand-held. We also used one of the first Nagras that came out."

One of the advantages in a profession that can be physically and mentally demanding is the creative control, the total fredom to shoot. "The philosophy at Wolper was to shoot film," recalled Alonzo. "They never said to you 'Don't you dare waste too much film.' Rather they would get angry with me if I did not come back with enough exposed film. On Grizzly! I don't know how many thousands and thousands of feet of film we shot. We shot animals that are not even in the film, that had nothing to do with grizzlies. There was microscopic wildlife that I filmed in the streams just because I was fascinated with them. I had some beautiful footage of eagles flying and landing in their nests. You have to be very alert for that sort of thing."

Wildlife photography requires a great deal of patience, but also quick reflexes. Very little planning can be done. Alonzo and other wildlife photographers agree that you must develop a sixth sense, some sort of anticipatory mechanism that clues you in to what might happen next, because as Alonzo put it, "You certainly don't tell bears to come back and do it again. You have to have your camera ready and right there so you can right away get it. And you have to expose it by eye. You don't have time to meter it. I got to the point where I could look through the lens and set the stop as I was shooting.

"The documentary dictates to you what is going to be done. Irwin Rosten had a concept

Photo by Frank & John Craighead

Grizzly sow and cub, tagged for observation. **Below:** ***John Alonzo.***

in his mind. He knew how to structure the 'unknown' footage we were going to get. I would follow his lead and try to embellish it. There were times when he'd be observing the Craigheads talking and it would seem boring to me. He would say, 'Shoot it.' I'd grab the camera and start shooting, knowing that he had a place for it. Maybe he didn't want it to be shown – maybe it was just for narrative. Sometimes I would outthink him. I would be walking along in the forest and start shooting. He would wonder what it was for. I'd say, 'Just watch, just watch.' Pretty soon he'd see what I was after and say 'Yeah, keep going. Keep filming.'

"You need that kind of collaboration. If you are a documentary cameraman you need that other pair of eyes that aren't look-

Photos by James Pickerell

ing through the lens to say 'Turn around. Here's something wonderful coming.' Although it sounds like a very independent profession, you need the collaboration of the Irwin Rostens and Dennis Kanes (Kane is currently executive director for television at the National Geographic Society and co-executive director of the specials). The word documentary implies that you are going to document real life – so you aren't going to dictate to it."

Alonzo moved into feature films in 1970 and has not made a documentary since – not that he hasn't wanted to. "I talked to Irwin many times and told him I was in a position now where I could give up a feature to do a documentary. I wouldn't do it for the money. I'd do it for the love of it."

"I prefer making films about people. I have spent time with the poorest people in Africa and when I go there I tell them that I am there to learn something from them. Sometimes, jokingly, I say that I am working on my own therapy. I have gone to people who have two chickens and live in Upper Volta or Mali or Sudan and after we visit and work with these people they want to give me one of the two chickens."

—Bert van Munster,
director of photography
"The Lonely Dorymen"
(1967)

In 1966 a young cameraman from the Netherlands, Bertram van Munster, got his chance to see the world. Perhaps if he had known the perils that lay before him he would have stayed in Holland shooting commercials and Fox Movietone News, but it's doubtful. He is a passionate man with a love of adventure, and if shooting "The Lonely Dorymen" for National Geographic did not cure him, nothing will.

Van Munster's original assignment from Wolper Productions was merely to fly to Portugal to cover the departure of the Portuguese fishing fleet. He and Dennis Kane, assistant to the director of television, thought it would be great to send someone out with the fleet, but at that time no one had planned a documentary on the fishermen. As van Munster described it, he and Kane were just youngsters and thought no one would listen to them. He shot his film and went back to Holland.

Two days later he was back in Portugal. "They said, 'This is the ship, here is your blanket,

you are gone for half a year.' I said, 'You got it,' " recalled van Munster. Thus began the odyssey. Everything happened so fast that van Munster had to have equipment flown in. Another shoot had just ended; the equipment for it was shipped in quickly, but most of it was damaged. Finally he found a camera, an Eclair, that worked – only none of the lenses were very good. He and a friend wound up at a Portuguese television station in the middle of the night to get the lens calibrated. The next day, van Munster and his Eclair plus at least one good lens and soundman Paul Verhoeven with his Nagra set sail in the 100-year-old four masted schooner *Jose Alberto*.

When the fleet leaves each year the families of the fishermen stand on the docks wailing in mourning. Wives and lovers do not expect their men to return. They tried to warn van Munster. "The fisherwomen came up to me saying, 'Why do you go on this boat? You can't go on this boat. You will never come back.' They think you will fall off the earth."

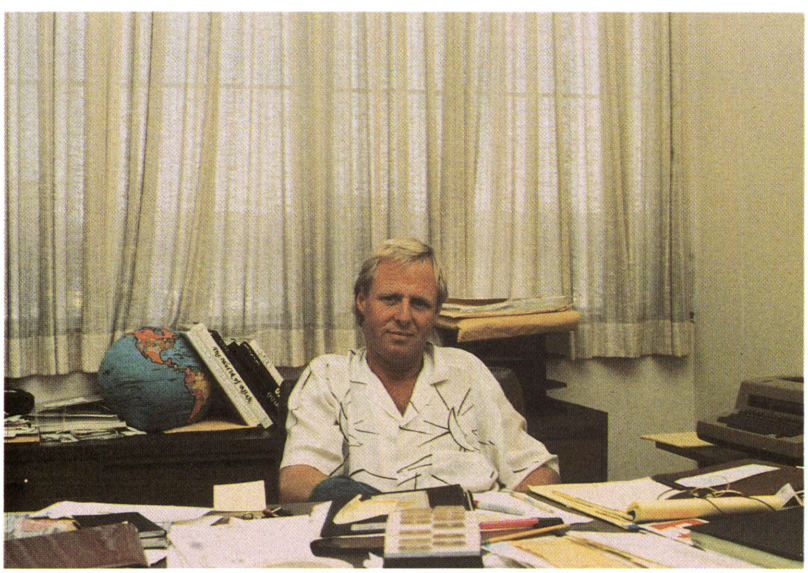
As Dutchmen, van Munster and his companion were familiar with the sea. They knew what it took to make a journey across the Atlantic from Portugal to the Grand Banks off Greenland. Or so they thought. Early in the morning on the first night out, they got a taste of what the trip would be like. They awoke in the respective beds (van Munster slept in the chart room, a small space about 3 feet by 4 feet and his friend Paul slept under the table in the captain's room) because the boat was rolling. "It was a very heavy Atlantic roll – up and down. And with the masts, the boat swayed like crazy. Even in a calm ocean the boat sways 40 degrees both ways. So now this boat was rolling up and down and swaying back and forth. I said to Paul, 'What did we do? Just the crossing is going to take two weeks!' That looked like a long time then."

Day's catch must be brought aboard the* José Alberto *before anyone sleeps.

The first week was spent trying to gain sea legs. Everyone, including the fishermen, seemed to get sick. Van Munster could not eat for the first week out. The combination of the movement, the smell of the diesel fuel, and the large bowls of olive oil that were always on the table took away any appetite he might have had. Instead he shot film morning, noon and night. For the two filming was therapy.

Within a week everyone was acclimated, and van Munster was coping with a different set of problems. There were 79 people on the boat. Seventy-seven of them were illiterate. He and Paul spoke no Portuguese and no one spoke Dutch. The captain and a few others spoke broken English. The only solution was to learn Portuguese. "By the end of the trip we spoke it well enough. Everything we needed to know about fish we knew how to say in Portuguese."

As it turned out, the trip across the Atlantic took five weeks. The ship was iced in outside the port of St. Johns, Newfoundland for many days with no radio. Explains van Munster, "Our radio caught fire and burned. In the middle of one night there is tremendous smoke from this electrical fire. Before we know it we are all standing on deck, all 79 of



Alone in the icy waters of the North Atlantic "you are nothing!" **Center:** ***Fishermen worked at least 12 hours a day.*** **Below:** ***Van Munster in his office at Videomakers.***

Photo by Nora Lee

us, ready to jump in the boats because we think the ship is on fire. One of the guys sees one of the fishermen ready to throw a bucket of water on the electrical fire. He grabs him just before he lets the bucket go. I am standing here on an old boat in the middle of the ocean. The boat is on fire. There is no radio and I'm loving it! This is one for the excursion department! Travel with the National Geographic and see the world."

The drama did not end there. An icebreaker finally got the *Jose Alberto* out of the ice. The fishermen were anxious to get on with their task after so much wasted time. Van Munster, on the other hand, only wanted off the boat. Negotiations were concluded with the captain of the icebreaker to take him, the precious film and the sound man to St. Johns. Because of language difficulties and some erroneous impressions, the captain thought he was rescuing two sailors who had had trouble at sea. The authorities at the port, however, figured out that the two men were actually sailing with the Portuguese and the captain of the icebreaker should never have taken them on board. He, his crew of 90 and the two intrepid documentarists were quarantined for ten days. "I think they still do not like me in St. Johns," van Munster said.

Finally fishermen and film crew reached the Grand Banks. The *Jose Alberto* was the mother ship to about 70 small boats called dories. Each day the dories went out, one fisherman to a boat. Each man tended his mile-long line of hooks for 12 hours in the land of the midnight sun. When he came in, boat loaded, there was another six hours of work: the fishermen were also responsible for packing the cod in salt to preserve it till the return to Portugal. Only after the day's catch was safely salted in the hold was there any time for eating or sleeping.

Van Munster went out on occasion with a fisherman in his dory. There was no extra place in the boat for him and as the catch

was hauled in, one at a time, he had no choice but to sit on the fish. "The boat would fill up and I was sitting with my Eclair on top of the fish, sometimes several feet above the side of the boat. I would sit with one of these guys for 12 or 15 or 17 hours while he was fishing. You can't even see the other guys. It is freezing cold and you are nothing. If the boat turns over that's it – 60 seconds – you just can't make it. And then the Eskimos don't like you. They see the fishermen as rivals and they shoot at them."

Even after weeks of such experiences at sea there was nothing to prepare van Munster for what came next: the sudden violence of a hurricane. Around midnight one day, the water was flat and calm, but by 4 o'clock in the morning he thought he was in hell. "Off Greenland the sea suddenly became very violent; we were supposedly 300 miles north of the center of Hurricane Arlene. As it turned out, we were the only boat, the *Jose Alberto* – the boat I was on! – that was right in the middle of the hurricane. I couldn't believe it. There are three feet or more of water in the boat. We are in this storm the likes of which I have never seen in my life. The boat is on two anchors, and they have the engine on full speed ahead, but it is a very small engine for such a big boat – 500 horsepower. It is like nothing."

In a situation like this, most people would be trying to stay dry and warm, and perhaps they would pray. Not a documentary filmmaker. "Here we are in the middle of this storm and it is unbelievable. I am with the first mate and I am saying 'I've got to have this shot! I have got to have this!' It is crazy. I go up on deck with the camera and the first mate, who is a bear of a guy, and we are lying there on the deck. The wind is howling! The waves are coming through. It's like you put a fire hose in front of you. I am trying to film this storm, but there is no way . . . and that was the first time I threw up. I wasn't trying to be a hero, but I threw up while I was shooting."

Photo by Paul Verhoeven

Each fish is hauled in individually off a line that runs about a mile in length.

The storm raged for 24 hours, and the only things between it and the total destruction of the *Jose Alberto* were two anchor chains. If one had broken, the ship would have spun in the water and been drowned by the violent sea. Van Munster sought out the captain. "He couldn't eat; there was no way to cook anything. It was freezing cold; so he lay on his bed and prayed. And the chains held." Van Munster might not have gotten the shot he wanted, but what he did get was included in the documentary.

Sometimes returning to civilization doesn't end the filmmaker's trials. "From Newfoundland I flew home, and there was nobody on the plane that wanted to sit near me! I'll never forget it! I stank so badly. Not just my clothes, but everything I had. It was inside me. I had become a fish. All I had eaten was cod fish – for breakfast, for lunch, for dinner – cod cake, fried cod, olive oil and cod – and there was blood everywhere. You can't believe it. I had become one of those guys. I had to. In a situation like that if you cannot identify, you go nuts." Part of identification for van Munster was purposely avoiding conscious comparisons with his own society and cultural background. The ability to take his subjects on their own terms helped him subsequently to cover various wars in Africa.

Van Munster now has his own company in Los Angeles called Videomakers and continues to make documentaries, only he has switched from 16mm to videotape. He likes the dual role of director/cinematographer and resists the somewhat common idea that making documentaries is just a stage one goes through. He knows from firsthand experience that there are thousands of stories to be told, particularly on the African continent and in Central and South America. His tremendous commitment, his passion to learn and then teach, is a prerequisite for excellence in documentary filmmaking.

Van Munster's experience filming "The Lonely Dorymen" did not end with the flight

"Mother Russia" dominates the landscape at Volgograd where thousands come every year to pay tribute to war dead.

Photo by Jonathan Wright

home. "There is a very close camaraderie that develops. I have returned to Portugal several times and visited some of the men in their little villages, and I still feel very close. It was an incredible experience for life. Not a day goes by in my now somewhat comfortable life that I don't think of that trip. It has had a tremendous effect on me."

Not all National Geographic assignments took the documentarists to the edge of the world or tested their very ability to survive. Still, one of the main ideas behind the specials was to take audiences to places they had never been before. Often these were regions that few people had ever travelled. That was the case in 1976, when, after over two years of careful courtship, Dennis Kane received permission to document life along the Volga River in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Irwin Rosten, who was elected to produce and write this landmark film, told a story illustrating Kane's difficulties with the Soviet authorities. When permission for a research trip was granted, Kane took a copy of his 1969 documentary "Siberia: The Endless Horizon" as an example of the kind of storytelling he intended to do. The reaction of at least one member of the official Russian audience was the unshakable opinion that the film he had just seen had never been shown in the United States. Kane insisted that it had been seen on network television and even gave the man times and dates. The Russian was unconvinced. Kane asked why; the Russian replied that it was not anti-Soviet enough.

Fortunately other ministry officials were easier to convince of Kane's good intentions. Arrangements were made to take a cruise down the river on the flagship of the Volga cruise line, the *Lenin*. The crew would be accompanied everywhere by the Novosti, the Soviet Television Division.

Numerous restrictions were placed on the production; the first involved the choice of crew. The Soviets wanted a Russian crew under the direction of an American. Rosten and Kane objected and finally succeeded in bringing André Gunn aboard as director of photography. According to Gunn, "Somehow Dennis and Irwin had the stronger nerves and they won. To save face, of course, the Russians also provided a crew. Most of the time we worked happily together. They were in excellent shape, really, having a hell of a nice time doing nothing!"

> *"We retraced our own civilization, searching early man, and witnessed the last days of the King of Kings, the Lion of Judah, His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. There we saw the middle ages trickle away and survived the terror when our whole crew was kidnapped and kept hostage by "unidentified bandits" who would rather use their daggers than waste a bullet. Continually moving with the bandits, chased by the troops of the Emperor, strafed by gunfire and napalm, the ordeal lasted 16 days.*
>
> *Thanks to a very efficient U.S. Consul in Asmara, the continuous help of the U.S. Government and the National Geographic Society, we discovered the value of ourselves: $100,000 per person."*
>
> . . . André Gunn, director of photography commenting on "*Ethiopia:* The Hidden Empire" (1970)

By 1977, Gunn was no stranger to the perils of filming National Geographic Specials. Once again he was going into possibly hostile territory, but in Russia his greatest challenge would be trying to capture truth by shooting around bureaucrats, not bandits.

Gunn is a trained biologist who became interested in filmmaking when he was studying wildlife in Africa. He decided to

make a movie "that would be the best thing in the world." When he came back to Holland with his film, "I had a handful of loose sand – beautiful sand – but I couldn't get it together. Later on I sold all that material as stock footage, but at that moment all of a sudden I realized I was not a filmmaker. I decided to start from scratch, from the bottom up, as the assistant to the assistant to the assistant in a production company. For eight long years I learned from the best technicians of the time.

"It was rather a long and expensive way to learn, but in those days we didn't have a film insititute or a film academy. I learned an awful lot because for three years I was a newsreel cameraman. For each assignment I would receive the requisite rolls of film and if I didn't come back with my assignment and a good story, I had had it."

Seizing the moment, an essential part of newsreel photography, is equally important in documentary work. While all National Geographic documentaries start as outlines and well researched treatments, every filmmaker seeks for the unexpected within the structure – some touch of drama or humor or pathos that will give the film an added dimension. Gunn knew enough to expect anything when he set up to film at Volgograd on the Soviet equivalent of Memorial Day.

The plan was to follow World War II veteran Ivan Musatov as he visited the war memorials on Mamayev Hill with his 15-year old son Slava. Rosten, Gunn and crew were filming the pair near the burned-out remains of an old mill, left as a reminder of the war. According to Rosten, Sascha Schneider, the Russian-speaking associate producer, got word that Musatov's former commanding officer was approaching. Rosten's directions were, "Hold him off for about five minutes, Sascha. Just long enough to finish the shot, then let him come." He barely had time to warn Gunn of what might transpire.

Photo by Dick Rector

Photo by Jonathan Wright

Gunn is eye to eye with a young gorilla. The ape could see its reflection in the lens and refused to move away.
Below:
Rosten, Gunn and crew were able to shoot from inside the memorial hall in Volgograd.

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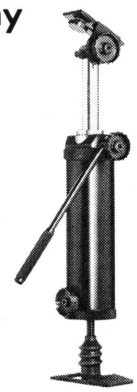

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As Gunn remembered the moment: "The meeting of the war veterans in Volgograd was one hundred percent – no, two hundred per cent – luck. Even the wildest script writer couldn't think it up. It sounds so phony. Honestly, if you were to write it up everybody would say, 'Oh gosh, please, NO!' This is not a soap opera – maybe Aaron Spelling would love it, but . . . We happened to be there and we anticipated that something might happen because we were at the celebration of the Memorial Day at Volgograd. It was one of those things that if you are a cinematographer and you do this kind of work, you have to have a sixth sense. . . . When I saw the two men embrace and Musatov began to cry, I could hardly watch the viewfinder because I was weeping. If you are moved that deeply, then you have to dry your eyepiece and film because you have a guld (Dutch coin) of gold."

As deeply affecting as Musatov's reunion was, he saw in it an opportunity to make his feelings known. He passed a note to the crew that said, "I ask you and all the American people, the people of Lincoln, protect the peace, for that is bread and life, blood and family." Rosten and Gunn tried very hard to approach their subject as free from prejudice as possible. There was mistrust on both sides, but the key seemed to be documenting what was rather than trying to document what wasn't.

Gunn put it another way when he described the wonderful shots he got of the people filing into the great hall to pay their respects to their war dead. "They were honored to have us set up in the Memorial Hall. If you can cope with the Byzantine mind of the Russians, the majority are just people like you and me. But they have a twisted way of thinking. They are so terribly suspicious, and maybe history has taught that to them because they were invaded many times and they have not an easy life. In general, they

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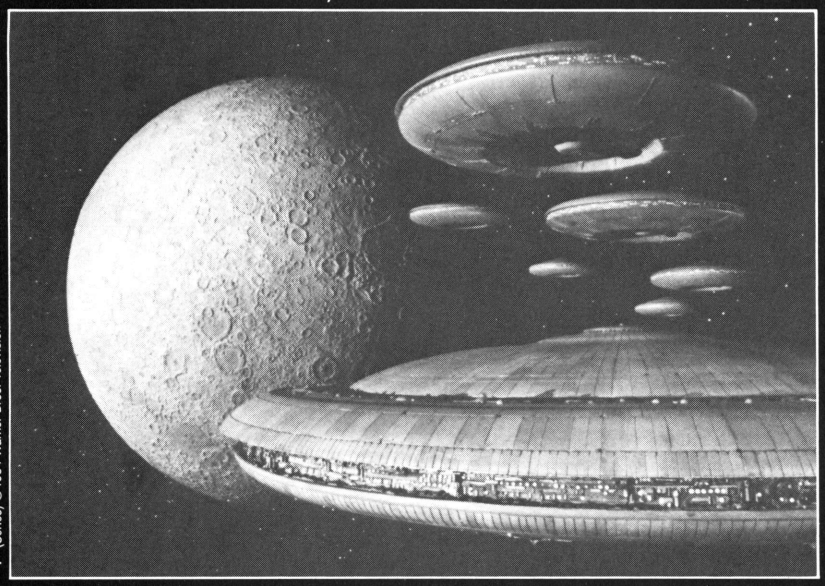

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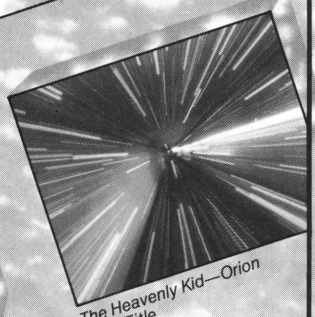

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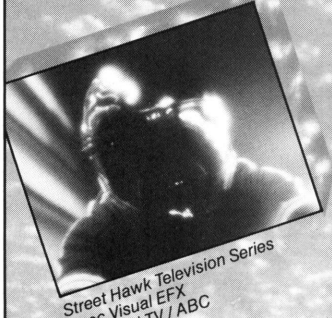

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are not so open as we are. But if you approach them in just the right way, they can be very helpful and very friendly."

Gunn expressed a strong belief that the equipment a cameraman chooses as a technician should free the artist in him. "At that time, the equipment we were using was a kind of lifesaver. We used it, not because we were so terribly lazy, but because grabbing action is more important than technicalities. I always believe in the most modern of equipment. At that time it was an Arriflex BL which was rather heavy but it always worked. And it had an integral light reading system – a device that would say you are off or on or you are over or under. That helped enormously because you could concentrate on your subject. You did not have to take readings and you didn't have to check focus. The camera became an extension of your eye.

"I always use Zeiss lenses. I never use anything else. I pay a little more and out of 10 or 12, I will pick two or three. It is a matter of laziness. If you have the very best equipment you can concentrate on other things. And I believe that on these expeditions – even to Russia where you can easily get things done there – it is important to travel with identical cameras and identical lenses, because I can cannibalize them if something goes wrong. You never know. . . . I always have a minimum of two."

Gunn's other important piece of equipment was his assistant. According to Gunn, "The assistant should be better than I am. Then I don't have to worry. I put up my left hand and get a full magazine. He prevents me from doing stupid things. I don't have to worry. I just keep the camera running." For "The Volga," Gunn's assistant was Deen van der Zaken.

Gunn continues to shoot documentary films for the National Geographic and others as well as teach film classes in his native Holland. He summed up one

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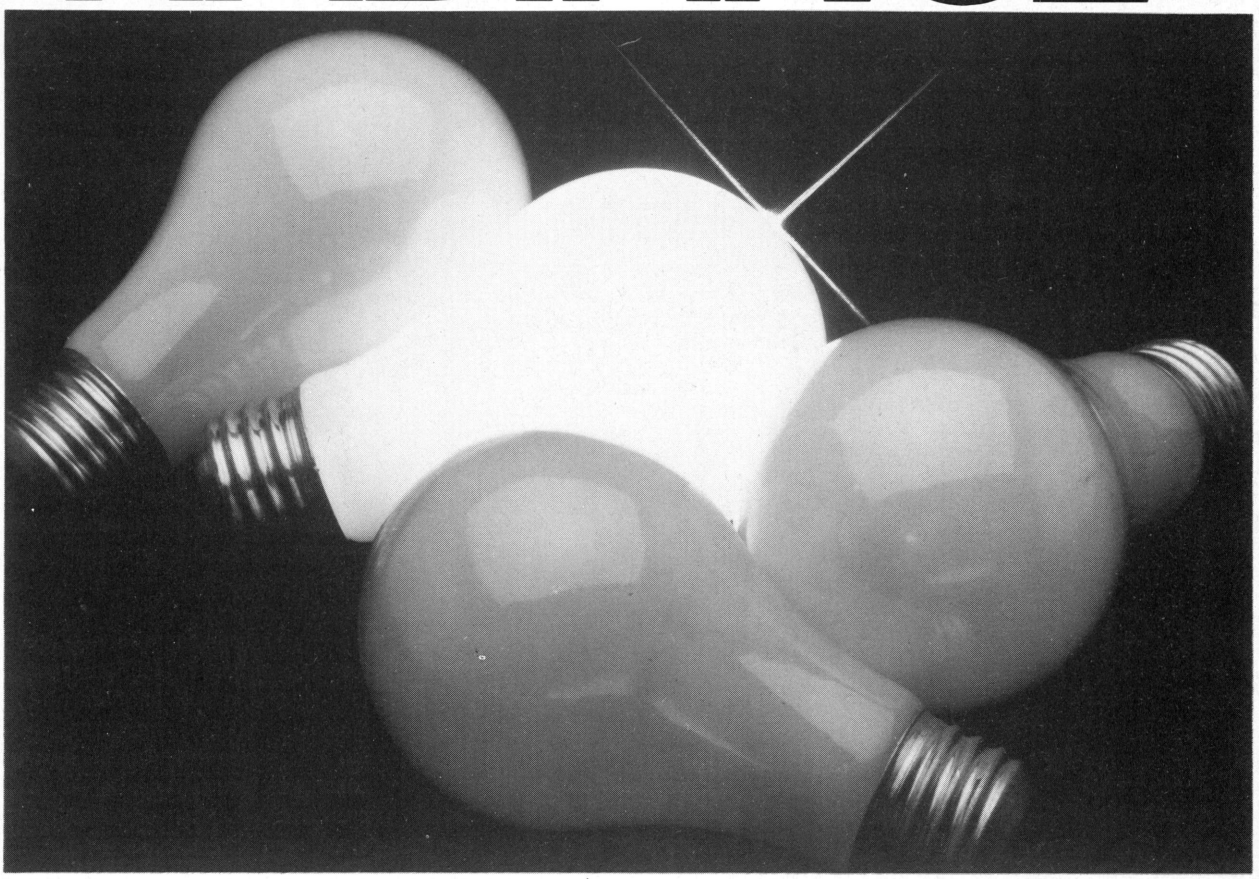

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set of requirements for documentary filmmaking when he told the story of his most rewarding film experience: "When I started 'Gorilla' it was with a feeling of 'Oh, well, we are going to make a picture about gorillas. So what?' I have made pictures about lions, hyenas and you name it. But here, all of a sudden, emerged something very, very rare, where we as humans came face to face with a bunch of very wild other beings – not from outer space – but to be approached with the same sort of attitude. I didn't know those apes!

"I felt so humble. We had no car. We had to climb high into the jungle. You had to be in top shape to climb that high. The jungle was so thick, I can't tell you. The California chapparal is a meadow in comparison. The amazing thing was that these big apes – a male weighs up to 600 lbs and could tear you to pieces – just sat there and looked at you as if to say, 'Oh, you are here to film? Okay. You are a professional? Okay. Just don't bother me.'

"They were big animals and we never knew for sure if we were doing something which could offend them, so we learned to be very humble. To protect ourselves we learned the pecking order behavior of an infant, because they won't do anything to an infant. If an ape seemed to be angry, you just cowered and bent your head and offered your buttocks, and you made peeping sounds like a bird. At that moment all the aggression in the adult flowed away. And if you have ever tried to film with your butt up and your head down while making silly sounds, well, you can make documentaries."

(Next month, cinematographers follow the great whales, seek out rare land animals, travel to Russia and photograph pyramids.)

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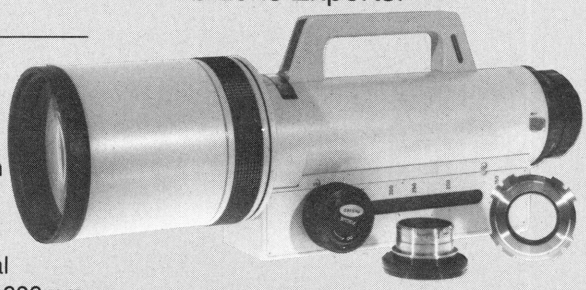

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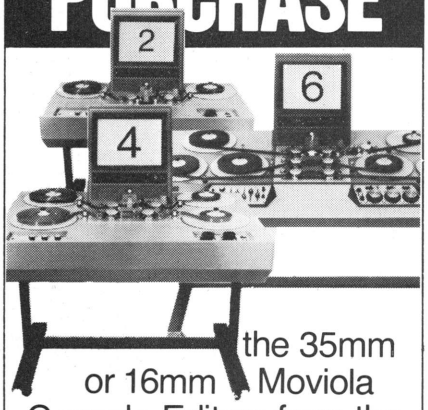

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The Chill Atmosphere of FRIGHT NIGHT

by Mark Steensland

Produced by Herb Jaffe
Written and Directed by Tom Holland
Photographed by Jan Kiesser

"*Fright Night* is a vampire movie," said Jan Kiesser, director of photography, "but it's a vampire movie with a story."

In what seems to be the lastest trend in fantasy films – that of emphasizing people and script over backgrounds and spectacular special effects – writer and first-time director Tom Holland (whose previous screenplay credits include *The Beast Within, Psycho II*, and *Cloak And Dagger*) wanted his film to be that way as well. "The genesis of the script grew out of my idea to make the vampire movie contemporary," said Holland of his film. "The genre faded in the 1950s because most vampire films then were still period pieces. Nobody knew how to bring them up to date. I like to think that this picture works well in contemporary terms."

Fright Night is about 16-year-old Charley Brewster (played by newcomer William Ragsdale), an avid horror film watcher who is devoted to the nightly ritual of viewing "Fright Night Theater," a horror movie show in the "Elvira" vein that is hosted by aging actor Peter Vincent (played by Roddy McDowall), known as The Vampire Killer.

One night, while watching the show with his girlfriend, Amy (played by Amanda Bearse), Charley looks out of his second story bedroom window to the vacant house next door. There, he sees a man – a vampire – kill a woman. Charley soon learns that their new next-door-neighbor is attractive Jerry Dandridge (played by Chris Sarandon).

Charley tries to convince his friends that Jerry is really a vampire, and, at first, nobody believes him. But, as the murders of young girls continue to fill the morgue of the tiny midwestern town with corpses, Charley's friends slowly begin to realize that he may be right. Finally managing to convince and recruit Peter Vincent: Vampire Killer, he and Charley head to the house to destroy Jerry Dandridge, vampire.

Countless vampire films have been made – from classics

such as Bela Lugosi's staple performance as Count Dracula, to the early 70s exploitation films like *Count Yorga: Vampire*. Unlike modern vampire films that have been produced in the last several years attempting to depart from tradition (*The Hunger, Lifeforce*), Holland wanted to stay true to the genre and was determined to do it. "I wanted to respect all of the conventions of the traditional vampire story – the coffin-beds, empty mirror, and the like – but place them in a contemporary setting," said Holland.

As director of photography, Kiesser's job was to do the same thing in the look of the picture: bring traditional horror film lighting (shallow pools of light and black shadows) into the same contemporary setting.

Originally a pre-med student, Kiesser was injured in an automobile accident that forced him to drop out. Before he could return to school, however, he was drafted and was stationed in Europe. There, he became involved in photography and in order to earn extra money so that he could travel when his tour was complete, Kiesser took a job as a projectionist in Special Services. The experience had a resounding effect on him. "I saw a different film each night for the entire six months I worked there." said Kiesser.

Returning home to Los Angeles, Kiesser realized that he lived right in the heart of the motion picture industry and it was at that time he decided to become a cinematographer.

His first job was at Wally Bullock's Animation Camera Service where he was a cartoon cameraman. "Wally was very supportive," said Kiesser, "He was always trying to help young people who wanted to get into the business. I really owe him a lot." Kiesser rapidly got work as a second assistant, eventually landing work with Gordon Willis, ASC and Haskell Wexler, ASC, as well as operating for Donald Morgan, ASC, on the Emmy-nominated *Elvis*.

Opposite: ***The neighboring house takes on a menacing appearance of its own.*** **Above:** ***Dorothy Fielding has a pleasant chat with Chris Sarandon, one of the nice young men from next door.*** **Below:** ***William Ragsdale reacts when he sees the vampire chatting with his mom.***

His big break came when Kiesser got on as camera operator for Academy-award winning cinematographer Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC. "I worked with Vilmos for four years," said Kiesser, "and he really was a great teacher. He taught me to never to be set in your ways about anything. He always told me to be open about new ideas and be willing to use new techniques."

Soon after that, Kiesser landed his first job as a full director of photography on Sidney Furie's *Purple Hearts*. That film was followed by *Choose Me, The River Rat*, and *Fright Night*.

"There was an early decision on this picture that we needed to show the contrast between Jerry Dandridge as a creature of the night and Charley Brewster as a creature of the light," said Kiesser, "I was going for a definite difference and to accomplish this we used warmer colors on the 'good guys' and cooler

Amanda Bearse responds to Sarandon's charm at the Club Radio.

colors on the 'bad guys.' Charley, for instance, is always in an orange backlight, while Jerry is always in a cold, blue backlight. Sometimes it's more subtle than others, but it is always there."

Although seeking contemporary lighting, Kiesser wanted to make sure that he remained true to the genre. "We watched a lot of old vampire movies," said Kiesser, "as well as other films such as *The Prisoner of Zenda* which has stunning black-and-white cinematography by James Wong Howe, ASC. But one of the best, and most interesting pictures we watched was Val Lewton's *The Cat People*, photographed by Nick Musuraca, ASC. The great thing about that picture is that there were so many shadows and pools of light and dark that a whole lot was left up to the imagination – which is really terrific. Although I like to have details in the shadow areas, we went for *The Cat People* 'look' on *Fright Night*. We tried not to show everything."

Pre-production on *Fright Night* began in October, 1984, and principal photography began at Laird Studios in Culver City on December 3, 1984 – the studio in which *Cat People* was filmed in 1942.

According to Kiesser, Holland made excellent use of storyboards. "Tom really did his homework. He came in with the entire picture boarded in these rather crude drawings, but at least they showed what he wanted – and he knew what he wanted."

"Tom had some definite ideas about some very specific things," said Kiesser, "like using the Louma crane for certain shots."

Early in the film, Charley sees Jerry Dandridge kill a young woman in the second story bedroom of his house. Looking down into the yard of the Dandridge house, Charley sees Billy Cole, Jerry's "live-in carpenter" and partner in ghoulish crime, carrying a plastic bag with a body in it out to a car. Thinking this is his chance to prove Dandridge a vampire, Charley runs downstairs and goes outside to get a closer look. As Charley watches from the bushes, a bat swoops down from the roof of the Dandridge house and changes into Jerry when it reaches the lawn. "Tom knew that this shot would be perfect for the Louma crane," said Kiesser, "Jerry's point of view is perfectly portrayed by the crane." According to Kiesser, Holland wanted to use the Louma much more, but time prevailed, permitting only two Louma shots to end up in the final film.

Exteriors of both Charley's and Jerry's houses were photographed on the Disney backlot while downtown Los Angeles served as other locations. For the night work at Disney, Kiesser used arc lights on Condors as his moonlight source. The entire film was photographed on Eastman 5294, but, because some of the shots were going to later serve as plates for optical effects work to be done by Richard Edlund, ASC, at Boss Films, Kiesser had to work at a high footcandle level. "For this picture, I rated the 5294 at a base rating of 200 ASA rather than the base of 320 ASA as given by Kodak," said Kiesser, "Since some of the camera negative was going to be used with 70mm over at Boss, we needed not only to minimize grain and contrast, but we also needed a properly dense negative. Rating the 5294 at 200 ASA seemed to do that. Also, we were working with an aperture of .4 most of the time, which meant we sometimes had a 200 footcandle key. That's a lot of light going around."

Another bonus of working at the slower rating was the increased color saturation and the rendition of good, solid blacks that both he and Holland felt were necessary to the look of the picture. By rating the 5294 at 200 ASA, Kiesser found he was able to print in the high 30s (at MGM, a 50 point print scale is utilized – the higher the number, the denser the negative. A 30 is a very dense negative for exterior night work on 5294).

During the course of the film, both houses are shown to change in relation to one another. As the film progresses, the Dandridge home, increasing its evil, changes until it looms over the Brewster house.

In order to depict these changes, Kiesser did several things.

"The lighting of the exterior of Jerry's house goes from a rather ordinary blue, moonlit look, to a decidedly eerie green look with dry ice fog pouring off the outside."

Also planned in the early discussions of the visual look of the picture with production designer John De Cuir, Jr. (son of veteran designer John De Cuir, whose recent credits include *Ghostbusters*), were actual physical changes of Jerry's house. "We wanted to really build parts of Jerry's house bigger than Charley's house and show it physically looming over," said Kiesser, "Unfortunately, budget prevailed." However, the effect is not lost as Kiesser accomplished the same look during principal photography. "We put the camera up on a crane with a 24mm lens," said Kiesser, "and we got the same sort of distortion." On film, Jerry's house appears to stretch up and over Charley's house in the background.

Another device used was the Panatate. Similar to the type of device used for *2001*'s spacewalking scenes, the Panatate rotates the camera on the axis of the lens. Like the Louma crane, the Panatate was used to denote Jerry's point of view in the sequence where he crawls down the outside wall of his home to look through the window at Peter Vincent and Charley. The shot begins upside down and then rotates to right side up as it looks through the window. The effect is both disorienting and chilling.

One of the sequences shot on location in downtown Los Angeles is Evil Ed's demise in the alley. A friend of Charley's who ostensibly refuses to believe in vampires, Evil Ed wants to take a short-cut through a dark alley. Charley tries to stop him, but Ed goes through anyway.

The alley is filled with pools of light, dark shadows stretching in every direction and atmospheric clouds of steam and fog. "We used a number of different things for smoke and steam effects," said Kiesser, "We used

Above: ***A vampire haunts the streets of an American city.***
Center: ***Ragsdale is determined that his room will be vampire-proof.***
Below: ***Ragsdale and Roddy MacDowell go vampire hunting.***

Above: ***Sarandon shows his true colors.*** **Right:** ***Director of photography Jan Kiesser, at left, and director Tom Holland, center, with members of the crew.***

smoke cookies, a unit called an oil cracker, regular moll fog, and even dry ice. However, we primarily used steam for the alley sequence where Evil Ed runs into Jerry Dandridge."

The other sequence shot in downtown Los Angeles was the Club Radio sequence. Built in what used to be Andrews' Hardware, Kiesser said the main thing that attracted the production to the abandoned, gutted, building were some of the architectural features inside. Not much work was needed to transform the cavernous building into the throbbing Club Radio.

"The interesting thing about the Club Radio sequence," said Kiesser, "was the use of spotlights." Blues, purples, pinks, yellows, and greens all pulse and move to the beat of the music inside the club. "We had the entire place rigged with HMI spots that could rotate in any direction and then they were hooked up to a computer and programmed for certain moves to the beat of whatever music we used for background."

Amy, Charley's girlfriend, is seduced by Jerry on the dancefloor at Club Radio and taken back to his house. Charley rushes to Peter Vincent's house and convinces them that they have to save Amy from the clutches of the vampire. Finally agreeing, the frightened Peter Vincent and Charley head to Dandridge's house for the final confrontation and the climax of the picture.

As they approach the house, green light and dry ice fog pour from it like a ghostly, evil presence. Together, Peter and Charley enter the house and fight Billy Cole (Jerry's assistant zombie) and defeat him. At that moment, Jerry appears and dawn begins breaking.

Chasing Jerry down into the dark basement, where the windows have been painted black to prevent sunlight from entering, Peter manages to get him out of his coffin bed. At this point, the interiors of the basement are lit cold and blue, denoting that the evil Jerry is still in power. But then, Charley begins breaking out the black glass, causing great shafts of sunlight to enter. To achieve the effect of bright morning sunlight, Kiesser used the extremely bright Xenon Skytrackers and placed them outside the windows of the basement set, pointing in. Specific windows were broken out in a certain order, creating a pattern of shafts on the set.

Finally, Jerry is cornered by the shafts and destroyed by the light. The final shot of the picture, showing Charley, Peter, and Amy in a very warm light, denoting their triumph over evil.

"I usually come in with a pre-conceived notion of what I want to accomplish with a scene," said Kiesser, "and that usually evolves as I watch the scene unfold with the actors. What I want to do with a scene usually never changes, but how I accomplish it usually does. I like to play a realistic source, but it is really relative to the scene itself.

"Photography should not be jarring. If the audience's attention goes to the photography, that means their attention is not on the story – which is where it should be. That doesn't mean that a picture can't look pretty. But you have to tell the story." △

Mark Steensland is a film student at Ithaca College in New York. His byline has appeared in Millimeter *and* Prevue.

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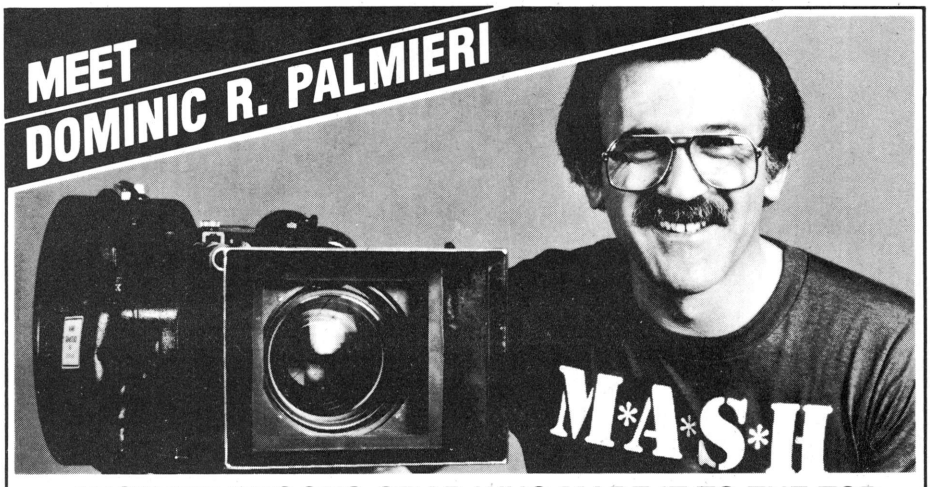

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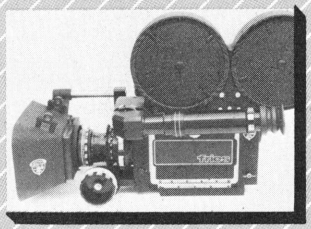

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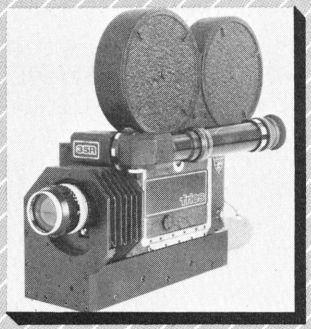

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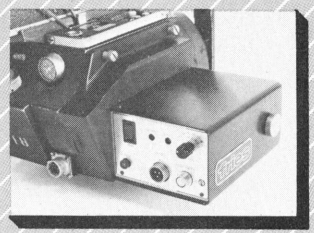

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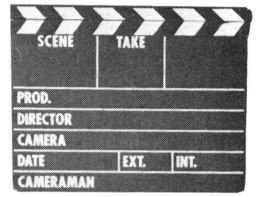

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"My Hair is Red, My Eyes Are Blue . . ."

by Robert S. Birchard

George and Marion Kirby are dead, and their ghosts have returned to haunt a befuddled Cosmo Topper – everything is as it was in 1937 when the Hal Roach production of *Topper* was originally released – only now it's in *color.* An example of Toronto based Colorization, Inc.'s handiwork, it is a candidate for renewed commercial viability on TV screens throughout the land.

In Hollywood, at the offices of Color Systems Technology, Inc., colorists are putting the red, white, and blue (and other colors as well) into the 1943 Warner Bros. classic *Yankee Doodle Dandy.* MGM, which now controls the Warners film, is quite excited about its possibilities as a color perennial.

Speculation has become a reality, and the application of computer and video technology has made it possible to bring color to monochrome film footage. There is no question that the technology works – in fact the results can be quite pleasing to the eye; but there is a great deal of discussion about whether coloring the classics will give old films and TV shows a new lease on life or is something akin to taking a Crayola to a Leonardo Da Vinci charcoal drawing. Wilson Markle, president of Colorization, Inc., is ambivalent about the question.

"Personally, I agree, I think it is a mistake to color films *for the big screen.* These films were designed for black and white, and many of them are beautiful. But we're talking about television, and if you own a black and white picture you know what the realities are – you just can't sell your product at all, or at least not at a price that is comparable to *any* film that is in color. We're providing a service for the entrepreneur who is trying to get the most out of his film investment.

"What we're doing is for television, and in the process I think

Constance Bennett and Cary Grant, the sophisticated spooks of the original 1937* Topper, *appear even more glamorous with a touch of 1985 color. Both shots photographed directly from the TV tube.

Photos Courtesy Colorization, Inc.

Oliver Hardy, Vivian Oakland and Stan Laurel share a stagecoach in their most popular feature,* Way Out West. *The addition of color adds new commercial life to the 1937 production.

we'll be doing the films a service because by being available in color these films will reach a new and wider audience. And those who are purists can turn off the color on their sets and still enjoy the films in black and white. But we hope that at least they'll have the chance to see some of these films and television shows."

For Charles M. Powell, of Color Systems Technology, the issue is much the same. "We're not making the pictures better (although in the case of *Yankee Doodle Dandy* it *is* better) we're making them in color. If the original producers had had a choice *they* would have made them in color, believe me. The Errol Flynn swashbucklers, and the Tyrone Power pictures – I loved those things as a kid, and my own children will never get a chance to see them because the TV programmers won't buy a black and white movie. Besides, we're not destroying the "Mona Lisa." You bring us the "Mona Lisa," we transfer it to tape and give the original back to you. We're talking about making these pictures viable in today's television and cassette market."

In a recent *New York Post* reader survey, sympathies ran 3 to 1 against coloring black and white films (making one wonder if there really is an audience aversion to monochrome or if it is a figment of the programmers' imaginations). Director Frank Capra has led an active campaign against coloring his films (although Colorization, Inc. insists that Capra was once enthusiastic about the possibility), but Cary Grant is reportedly "very gung-ho on the whole idea."

Both companies are sensitive to the critics, and Colorization has sought to develop an advisory board to help determine which pictures should be colored, while Color Systems Technology retains Academy Award winning art director Gene Allen as its consultant on how the color for each project should be approached.

Ultimately, the question of whether it is appropriate to color a picture like *Citizen Kane* may be moot. The technology is here, and if there is a demonstrated value to coloring black and white films, it will probably be done. There is little to indicate that the lack of color is a major reason that some TV series, for example, are no longer on the air. *I Love Lucy* and *The Honeymooners* still run successfully in syndication in black and white – but would *December Bride* or *My Little Margie* suddenly become syndie blockbusters if they were available in color? Still, the Colorization technology opens up some exciting possibilities. Think of the millions of feet of black and white stock footage which suddenly have new value!

In a certain sense, color has been a goal of motion picture technology from the very beginnings of the medium. Many early film companies employed armies of women to laboriously hand paint every frame of film – the results were sometimes spectacular (and sometimes not so), but the cost was ultimately prohibitive. Cheaper, more readily mass-produceable techniques were adopted by the industry. Tinting [coloring the film stock] and toning [replacing the black silver image with another color] became common practices – and the combination of the two, say a pink tint with a blue tone, could create spectacular if limited color effects. By the mid-1920's the Technicolor Motion Picture Company was having some success with its two-color process – which did record natural colors but without the full color spectrum that three-color Technicolor would provide in the 1930s.

From the time of the introduction of three-color Technicolor in feature film production with *Becky Sharp* in 1935 until the time of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* in the mid 1960s color became a matter of choice for filmmakers based on aesthetic considerations (i.e. musicals should be in color, war pictures in black and white) and application of the almighty dollar (for color was always more expensive than monochrome in this era).

But since the late 1960s when network television went "all color," the choice for filmmakers has been pre-determined. Every commercial motion picture must be shot in color if it is to bring top-dollar in its ultimate sale to TV. *The Last Picture Show, Raging Bull, Manhattan, Stardust Memories,* and *The Elephant Man* are merely exceptions that prove the rule.

Enter Colorization, Inc., allied with Mobile Video and the Hal Roach Studios. Using a combination of existing computer technology and specialized software, the company has been bring-

ing color to such "neglected" classics as the Laurel and Hardy comedies, Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life,* and such TV fare as *The Twilight Zone* and *The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp.*

The actual process of coloring the picture is at once complex and also rather simple. After transferring the film to tape, a color "cinex" still frame test of a representative scene is prepared by the art director for client approval, then shot lists are generated and the first frame of each shot is colored along with the first frames of any significant action changes within a shot (for example, if a new character should enter the scene). When this is accomplished, the Dubner CBG 2 Graphics computer runs through the film frame by frame tracking the motion within the shots. Finally, the selected colors are combined with the black and white master (which provides the luminance value) in an on-line editing session.

The Color Systems Technology coloring system, which was developed by Ralph Weinger, claims the only patent related to the coloring of black and white on video tape, the overall process is quite similar to Colorization's, although the assignment of defined areas to color, which is the basis of their patent, is handled differently.

The quality of the colored picture is dependent on a number of factors, some controllable, some not. Since the colors to be used in a given film can be selected or changed at will there is a great deal of flexibility, and with that flexibility the art director becomes an important factor in the process, for suddenly you are dealing with such intangibles as "color design" and "taste." It should also be said that there is "no free lunch." If your black and white picture is of poor quality – dupey, contrasty, scratched – your color picture will be the same. Random dirt specs and horizontal "cinch" marks can be eliminated through video noise reduction, but vertical scratches are there to stay.

Given a good print and good taste, the results are impressive – if not entirely realistic. The "colorized" look is comparable to the "picture post card" look of early three-strip Technicolor. The cost is also impressive – $2,000 a minute, and directly related to the time involved in preparing the colorized version. To quote Wilson Markle's comments before the SMPTE's 125th Technical Conference in Los Angeles on November 2, 1983:

"The tracking process currently takes, on average, approximately ten sec/film frame, and includes any midcourse corrections as well as computer time. At that rate, 1 minute of client's material would take 4 hours to track."

Markle promises that that time is about to be cut in half, and that Colorization, Inc. will be able to turn out an hour a day in the near future.

Color Systems is able to turn out an average of ten to fifteen minutes of finished color per coloring bay per day. With the three bays they hope to have operating soon, they should be able to turn out the equivalent of a feature film in a day and a half in the near future.

But time is only part of the picture. There is also a matter of just how much color you want to have in your film.

"Is fine detail really important?" Markle asked the technical conference. "That consideration will determine, within the budget, how many areas are to be colored. Does the audience need to see that in *Broadway Melody* [of 1940], the flower in Fred Astaire's button hole was red? It can be made red, but the added detail is time consuming. Does it detract from the scene if the color is missing?"

For the owner of a film library that kind of fine detail may not be important, but for the producer who is looking to integrate some colorized black and white material into the body of a color program it can be crucial.

For one producer, who prefers not to be named because he is actively involved in projects that require the use of colored black and white material, the question of "how much color" vs. how much money is a very real one.

"It's like the early '60s when commercials went to color, and Movielab was the only lab on the east coast that did color. There was no competition – it was a seller's market. There are only two places turning black and white into color – Colorization, Inc. and Color Systems Technology – and the costs are very high. The basic figure

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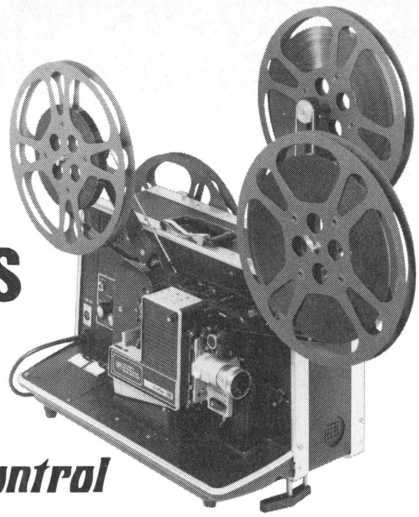

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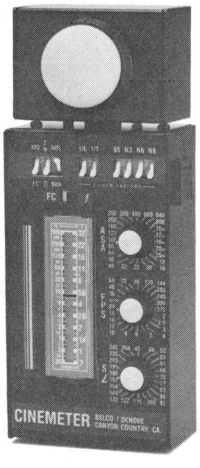

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of two thousand a minute at Colorization, Inc. is just that, a basic figure. For that you can color the greys. But if you want to put color in the whites, or if you want to put a color in the blacks, that's extra, and the costs really add up."

Wilson Markle, in a somewhat disarming manner, is sympathetic. "There really isn't a market *yet*. We're about the only game in town, and until we have some competition, and until the value of colorizing is demonstrated on some wider scale and until it is readily available there really won't be a market." To this end, Colorization, Inc. intends to make its latest generation equipment available to any interested purchasers. "We're in the service business, and we feel that it is important to help foster the market rather than to have a 'take us or leave us' attitude. If a studio would rather color their own films, we'd just as soon sell them the equipment to do it the way they'd like."

Charles Powell at Color Systems says that the pricing structure at his company is different. "We do every project with the same attention to color detail – after all, we want everything we do to look its best. It's our business, and every job is an advertisement. Our price is $1,500 to $3,000 a minute – depending on the volume of material you bring in – plus a royalty derived from your future sales."

It has been well over a year since Colorization, Inc. showed their first demonstration tapes to the public, and so far only a trickle of product has actually been converted to color.

"We made a few mistakes early on," says Markle. "We tried to combine all the functions into a single set of computer software. Now we've separated the colorizing and the combining programs. This will allow us to market the colorizer, and we'll continue to do the combining."

It seems the floodgates are poised to open. If, as Adolph Zukor said, "the public is never wrong," the audience will be the ultimate arbiter of Colorization's and Color Systems Technology's contributions to entertainment value. And who knows? Perhaps the befuddled viewer who wonders why there is no green in *How Green Was My Valley* will finally have his day. △

Bob Birchard is a free lance Los Angeles writer and film editor.

The Filming of *In The Name of the People*

by David Wiener

In The Name of the People is a guerilla's-eye view of fighting in El Salvador during 1981 and 1982. Frank Christopher, the producer and director, had been working at the San Diego affiliate of PBS when he decided to make the film. The final product of his efforts was an Academy Award nominee for best feature documentary of 1984.

To walk into a highly politicized war zone without sub rosa connections would be suicidal, so Christopher joined forces with a San Diego-based newspaperman named Alex Drehsler who had covered the region for some time.

"A lot of people get killed or hurt going down to El Salvador, presuming things, going out looking for guerillas and ending up stepping on land mines or getting caught in ambushes," Christopher said. "Alex had covered the war in Nicaragua, had extensive contacts and experience in the area and his articles were very much what I wanted to do."

Christopher then went to PBS for funding but the Washington office felt there was little news value in the idea, even with election imminent in El Salvador. In the meantime, Alex Drehsler had contacted CBS.

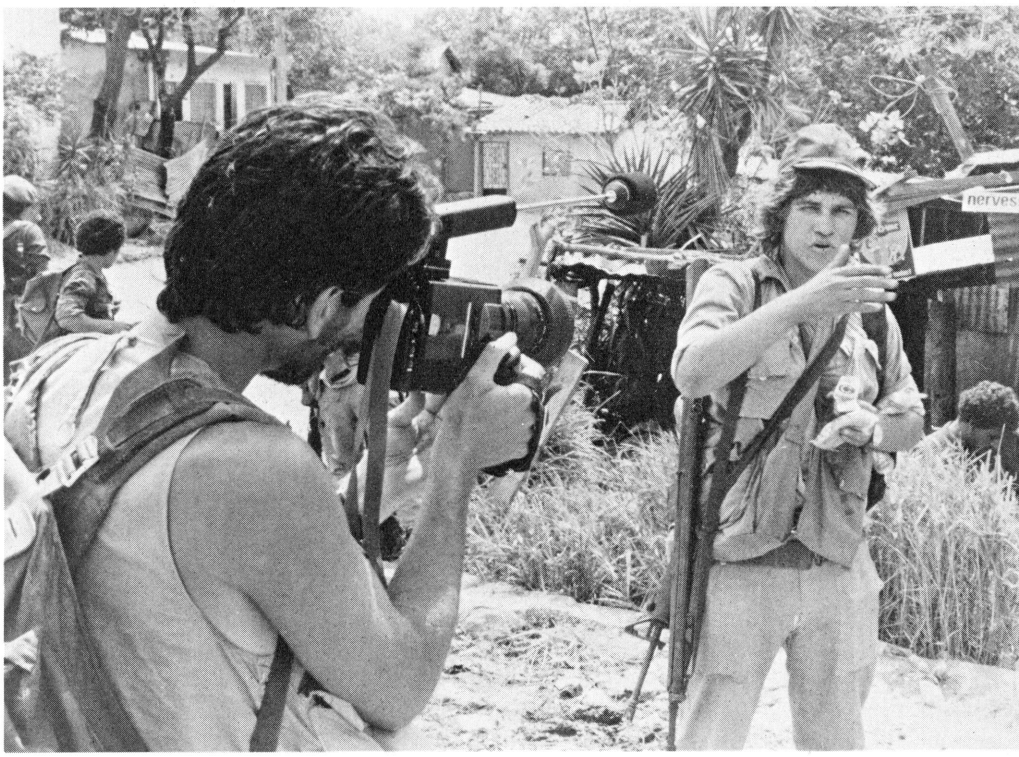
"CBS took a different approach," said Christopher. "They don't have too many people volunteering to go down into the guerilla zones because it's very expensive, it takes a long time to be smuggled in, it's dangerous and is just not something they would like their own staff people to do."

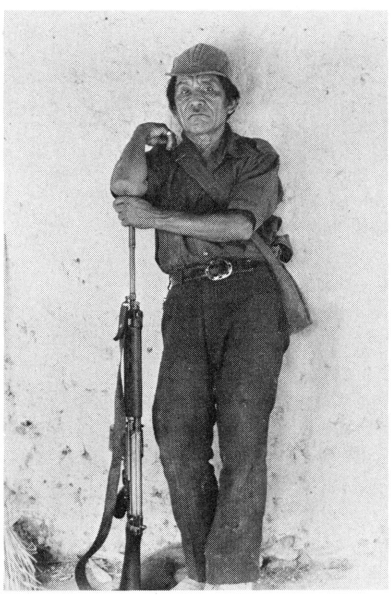
Like all news services, CBS does contract with freelancers and stringers so Christopher and Drehsler sent off the proposal to the network.

"At that time, I was looking for a way to do the film," Christopher said. "Alex had been in these areas and the border region of El Salvador is very arid, poor, high in altitude and just having the hair on your head is almost too much to carry. So I was aware of weight restrictions. I knew we couldn't convince many people to go with us so I knew we'd have very few people to carry things.

"I'm used to shooting 16mm or videotape, mostly 16mm negative. But that was out of the question. I just could not see lugging 20 hours of film, as well as the batteries and equipment needed to support this." Christopher even looked into solar battery chargers but abandoned the idea because they would present an excellent target to marksmen.

An architectural project shot in Super-8 drew Christopher's attention to the home-movie format, a gauge





Above: ***Christopher shoots a war in Super-8. Grim face of guerilla fighter tells the story.***

Some of the "soldiers" are female children.

which has been the subject of heated discussion among professionals since the middle 1960s.

"An architect went around the world shooting Super-8 and transferred it on a Rank-Cintel, a flying-spot system," Christopher said. "They had remarkable results from Super-8 to one-inch videotape. I was convinced that Super-8 would make a good vehicle if we took care in the exposure and used tripods as much as possible for steadiness.

"At the same time, I knew it was possible to do an optical blowup in San Francisco with a company called Interformat. They did blowups for the feature film *Elvis,* the footage from home movies (which included some *regular* 8) to 35mm."

The final release print of Christopher's film is 16mm, although he did do a test in 35mm. The expense and the grain were both too large and Christopher describes the Super 8 to 35mm print as looking a bit like grainy 16. Besides, the immediacy and drama of the events on screen make it very unlikely that the audience's attention will focus on "trivial matters" like grain structure. For the modern producer and the professional cinematographer this subjective advantage is something to be borne in mind when planning documentary shoots.

Christopher and Drehsler then approached CBS with the idea of original production in Super-8. This is something the network seldom does, but Christopher found a piece of information that provided a powerful lever.

"We talked to some people who knew that Dan Rather had used Super-8 in Afghanistan," Christopher remembered. "The fact that *they* had used Super-8 before was important. Then they went for it."

Drehsler was flown to New York to meet with CBS and discovered that the network liked the cost savings the small format offered.

"They put up about $3,000 in front money for an option to use a minute of film right away if we got back," Christopher said. "CBS furnished all the money for the film, provided sound and film equipment, all the batteries and airfare and expenses while we were down there. They guaranteed to process it and transfer it to tape. I also worked out a deal where they had a two-month option to use footage after which it reverted back to our rights. I really wanted to make a film, not just shoot and let it vanish."

After more research and phone calls Christopher had assembled a small crew, including John Chapman (who had filmed in Nicaragua using Super-8) and Doug Bruce (second unit camera and sound recordist).

"Then we looked around for some equipment," Christopher said, "and we chose Canon cameras, off-the-shelf models. They have good optics and are easy to use.

"Next question was sound. We couldn't work all the bugs out of a double-system scheme using Sony cassette decks so we ended up using lavaliers and shotgun mikes into the cassette decks. We recorded on the cassette where we mixed and controlled levels, but sent the signal *from* the cassette deck to the input jack on the Canon itself. The sound was recorded on the magnetic stripe in sync but we also had the backup cassette. We'd keep the microphones as far away from the camera as possible because the Canon is noisy. We'd always wrap the camera up in John Chapman's down parka."

Tests with several film stocks convinced Christopher that Kodachrome 25 was best suited to the job, but when low-light filming was unavoidable, Ektachrome 160 was used.

"We ended up pushing the Ektachrome a couple of stops and it still held up very well," Christopher said. "But it gets grainy and there was the problem of blowing it up.

"We couldn't do any test blowups but we did do transfer tests to videotape and saw that the process was viable. The Kodachrome 25 held up very nicely." CBS had contracted for videotape from the original; Christopher planned to use an 8-to-16 blowup for his own production.

The guerillas then agreed to infiltrate the film crew into El Salvador.

"We flew down to San Jose, went to Nicaragua, then they set up a contact in Honduras," Christopher said. "It involved all kinds of cloak-and-dagger stuff, wearing certain clothes, passwords and so on." A river crossing led them to guerilla-held territory in El Salvador. "We had 13 packs and decided on 50-foot cartridges because the 200s have a tendency to jam. The 50s were fast loading and, while they were a short load, you could do an interview on one very nicely."

They took two new Canons, along with John Chapman's own Super-8 camera, a tripod, the Sony cassette decks and some microphones rented from CBS.

"And we had a lot of batteries," Christopher added, "you could follow us through Central America by the batteries."

Once at the guerilla camps, Christopher and Drehsler worked from a rough outline.

"Our proposal was based on what Alex had seen in other camps,"

Christopher said. "We were looking for certain *kinds* of people, certain *types* of activities. We had some idea of what we wanted but we had to adapt as we went along. Sometimes the guerillas would direct us to film certain things but we were always telling them what we wanted.

"Each night Alex and I would go over what we had seen, do a lot of pre-interviews to get to know these people. We sensed what scenes we wanted to build in the camp."

Tripod work became very important but it could not always be used.

"There was a lot of training stuff that we had to do hand-held," Christopher remembered. "For instance, when they were training in the brush or mountains.

"There are a couple of interior scenes. I remember one political education class. They brought in every kerosene lamp they had, three or four, and they lit this small adobe room. We filmed it with Ektachrome and pushed it two stops and used the kerosene lamps as key lights for individual closeups. It came out really nice, there is a warm orange color and it blew up very well." The only other Ektachrome scene was a late afternoon wedding. "We started out Kodachrome and had to mix in a little Ektachrome as the day wore on to film the dancing."

One problem with the Ektachrome was its soft emulsion. In the extreme heat of El Salvador, it tended to scratch more easily than the tougher Kodachrome.

"And the heat was a problem," Christopher said, "especially marching with packs on people's bodies, sweating right through the packs to the point where the film boxes dissolved and the only thing that kept the cartridges from being loused up was the aluminum foil wrap Kodak puts on."

Marches were very difficult and John Chapman got the worst of it. He would film the column as it passed by and would then have to run to catch up; after a day of doing this he collapsed and almost died, having neglected to take his salt tablets.

The climax of the film is the attack on the capital during the elections.

"Since there were four of us," Christopher said, "we decided to break into two groups. Alex and John had been under fire in Nicaragua and decided to go in with the assault team that would attack the National Guard post. Doug and I would cover the commando group that was taking the streets and building barricades. We gave our third camera to a guerilla who has some experience with Super-8. In fact, his footage wound up being the title sequence of the film. I was directing Doug who was shooting and we would later follow the wounded into the medical unit.

"We knew the army was coming when a rocket-propelled grenade attack hit in front of the command post. We just started running out of town, filming what we could on retreat, mainly concerned with getting the hell out of there."

Getting out of the country was no mean feat as the film crew was in El Salvador illegally. CBS wouldn't help because word had leaked that a camera crew had been with the guerillas.

"CBS said, 'We can't have anything to do with you because we don't want to lose our position,'" Christopher recalled. "This was disappointing because we felt that there was our opportunity to get out." Luckily, some contacts they had made with Mexican journalists led them to the Mexican embassy where they sought asylum. A representative of the U.S. embassy spoke to the crew after the Mexicans had granted the request and let them know that the Salvadorans would not let them leave by the usual route unless they were forthcoming with information on guerilla activities they had witnessed. Otherwise, the Salvadoran government was going to deport them.

Christopher found this a welcome development.

"I said, 'Fine, deport me, when can you do it?' And the U.S. embassy representative said, 'You won't be able to get back into the country!' and I said, 'I don't mind, I just want to get out!'" With that, and an agreement that they would at no time be processed by the Salvadorans, Christopher and company simply left.

Some film was cached with the guerillas, who later smuggled it out of the battle zone through Nicaragua.

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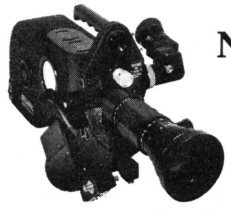

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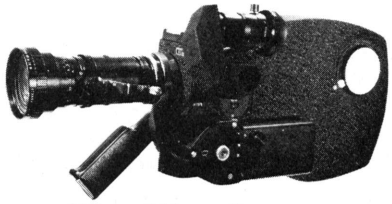

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Michael Hinton, the owner of Interformat, speculated that the greenish shift of some scenes might be attributed to the underground storage and the heat. (This shift was corrected in the blowup.)

"Then came the real hassle with trying to raise money for post production, which was quite expensive," Christopher said. "For instance, the footage we wanted for background scenes cost $3,000 a minute and then we had to kinescope it and blow it up.

"Once I had cut the film down from 20 hours to an hour and a half version, I had to go back to the Super-8 and cut it all. I cut about three hours of Super-8 and Interformat blew it up to 16mm negative. It's a frame-by-frame process, a Super-8 and 16mm camera interface which is very time consuming and costs over $1 a foot, plus lab work. It cost $9,000 to do that."

Christopher raised the money he needed by selling footage to NBC and to the Stanford and University of Texas archives along with transcripts (each school paid about $5,000) and arranged a number of fund raising events, as well. He also started producing commercials and industrial films.

"The rough cut took about six months," Christopher said, "the video rough cut about a year. That was the initial cut down from 20 hours. The film conforming was time consuming and the sound problem was immense. We had to transfer the stripe and maintain sync, go through a resolver, to a Nagra and then transfer the quarter inch to mag. It worked out after a couple of trials. Then there was the music and subtitles and we finally got Martin Sheen to do the narration for no charge.

"It was right down to the wire to get a theatrical screening in time for an Academy Award nomination; the first trial print was actually projected and it came right from the lab, flown in that day. That's how close it was."

After months of effort and tedium, Frank Christopher figures his feature will just about break even. In the crap-shoot world of show business financing, that's not unusual or bad at all. △

David Wiener is a San Diego-based free lance writer.

Visuals for a Super Car Commercial

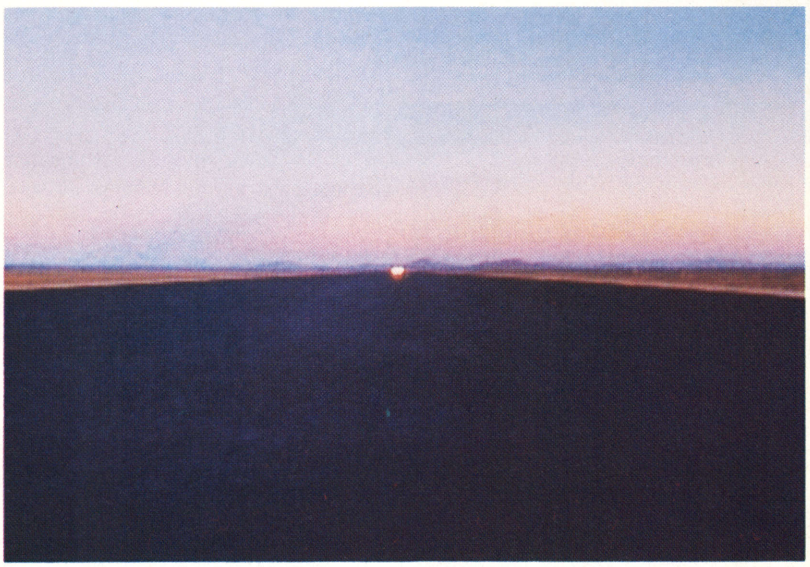
by Ron Magid

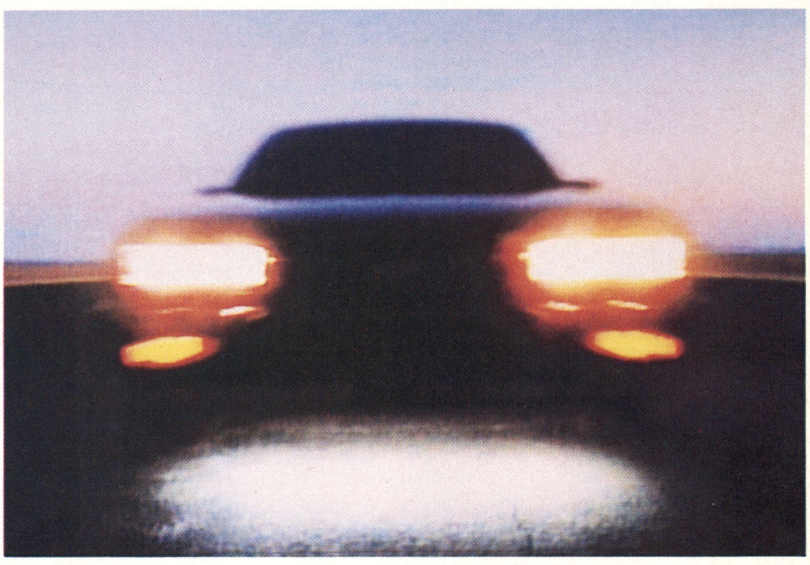
American automobile manufacturers have long waged war against their more chic, stylish and fashionable foreign counterparts. Nowhere is this battle more pitched than in California, easily the most image-conscious state in the Union, where cars are more than transportation and what you drive becomes a direct extension of your personality. Beginning in late 1984, General Motors created The California Project, a multi-million dollar marketing effort designed to bring Chevrolet sales in the Golden State in line with sales in the rest of the country. GM understood that in order to raise sales in California, they would have to reach the target market by delivering a series of innovative communications efforts that would appeal to intellectual and image-conscious "Yuppies" – those fast thinking, independent, upwardly mobile professionals who have proved unresponsive to typical "midwestern flavored" national consumer advertising.

Enter Eric Steven Stahl, an American who received his formal education in design and advertising in Milan, Italy, and his film training at the USC School of Cinema. Stahl is president of a Beverly Hills based advertising and communications agency, The Pathelogical Corporation (TPC). His previous directorial credits include the first 70mm six-track digital stereo film ever made, *Digital Dream,* which TPC produced for Glen Glenn Sound.

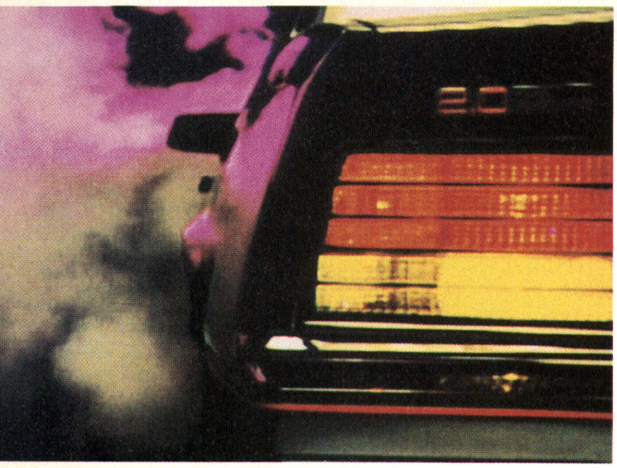
Stahl saw an opportunity to create a television campaign for General Motors that would not only look unlike anything that had come before, but would be what he calls "psycho-acoustically startling."

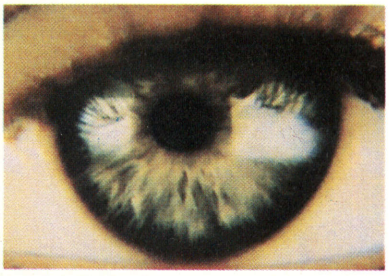
In order to cut through the "media clutter" of ordinary commercials, Stahl designed a campaign that would look, sound, and be presented in a different fashion. He chose a high-tech look in order to drive home the message that the Chevrolet Cavalier is a sleek, sophisticated road machine of the Eighties, rather than a typical "meat-and-potatoes" family-mobile. The spot was given a digital stereo soundtrack – the first ever to be utilized for television – another means to make the commercial stand out from the crowd. Finally, it was determined that a "teaser style" campaign, much like a film trailer campaign, would be the best media approach to attract attention. The spot was shown in increasingly longer versions, beginning the first week with a ten-second snippet, followed the second week by a thirty-second clip, and the third by the complete sixty-second spot. The campaign culminated in another thirty-second condensed version of the sixty-second commercial, which ran for three weeks.





Above: ***The Cavalier V-6 headlights appear in the distance of the Mojave Desert airstrip.*** **Below:** ***The auto on a collision course with the camera. This shot was made in reverse.***





Above: ***Rear view of the Cavalier Type 10.*** **Below:** ***Complicated zoom-out from the pupil of a human eye.***

According to Stahl, this highly unusual campaign, entitled "Yes . . . It's A Chevy," was conceived as a "graphic representation of the cerebral synapse in a human being's brain connected to the retinal process of scanning the Cavalier for the first time." This sophisticated and suggestive commercial consists of a kaleidoscopic montage of electrical synapses, fragmented beauty shots of the car, and a linear voyage down a high-tech suspension bridge, climaxing in an "ultimate trip" experience as the camera flies out of the eye of the observer. An array of special effects, opticals and over 180 fast cuts in the sixty-second version create a feeling of breathtaking speed and exhilaration.

To photograph the campaign, Stahl chose his director of photography on *Digital Dream,* George Stephenson. Stephenson, a graduate of the London Film School, worked for several years as a camera assistant in England before being drafted into the United States Army, where he served for two years in Vietnam in the documentary film unit, making propaganda films for the Army and various other public agencies. Upon his discharge, Stephenson moved to Hollywood, where he began as a production assistant at David Wolper Productions. He is currently a camera operator, and has recently completed two features in this capacity: *Creature* and the upcoming *My Chauffeur.*

Stephenson, who feels that "cinematography is nothing but solving one problem after another at an incredibly rapid rate," had his hands full on this four stage commercial. Because Stahl's imagery was so diverse, Stephenson found himself shooting in a variety of locations: beauty shots on a Hollywood soundstage, the eye and plasma energy light sculpture shots at TPC's Beverly Hills facilities, and exterior footage on the Oakland Bay Bridge outside San Francisco.

Since principal photography did not begin on the commercials until late December, 1984, and the spots were scheduled to air at the end of January, time became a critical factor for Stephenson, who was forced to compromise with poor weather conditions, undersized soundstages and difficult lighting set-ups. In San Francisco, he recalled, "Time did not permit us to wait for the optimum light. The time of year was December, and it couldn't have been worse. The sun never broke through, so I used a coral filter in order to give the shot some warmth."

On the soundstage in Hollywood, Stephenson's problems were not so easily corrected. The only rental stage available at the time lacked the height in order to hang the chicken coops properly, and seamless taffeta was unavailable as well. "I had my hands tied and we had a couple of points against us from the beginning," Stephenson remembered. "Though I hadn't actually lit a car commercial in my life, I've talked to other cinematographers and learned that there are two things you don't want – a white car and a black car, which is exactly what we had. Not only did we have a black car, we had a black stage. In order to separate the Cavalier from the background, to give it a little color and pz-zazz, I shot gelled light into the front fill cyc to give the side of the car a beautiful magenta cast, and I used smoke to fill in behind the car, and then lit the smoke with colored gels which provided the contrast we would have got with a different colored cyc." The smoke and colored light had the added effect of enhancing the mystical quality with which Stahl had imbued the car.

To create the effect of synapses in a human brain, four light sculptures by artist Bill Parker were selected. This was the first time that these sculptures had ever been photographed for commercial purposes, and Stephenson's problems arose from the fact that the storyboards did not call for a shot of the entire sculpture, but only the electronic discharges themselves, which gave off so little light that they did not register on the light meter. Clips of all four sculptures were later edited together by Stahl to create the effect as it appears in the spots.

The most challenging shot in the entire commercial involved the final pullback from inside the pupil of a human eye to a close-up revealing the model's entire face. In order to obtain this highly complicated maneuver, Panavision provided special support services by rigging a 23-460mm zoom lens with two diopters originally used in the film, *Westworld.* Because of the very small T-10 aperture, a tremendous amount of light was needed just to get an exposure. There were numerous critical factors to contend with: the depth of field, the zoom itself, keeping the model's head absolutely still and, most of all, the lighting, which had to change dramatically as the camera completed the pullback. "When we pulled out to the wide shot," said Stephenson, "there had to be a pretty, soft commercial lighting on the model's face, which created a contradiction in terms since we were blasting all this light in to get an exposure for the lens. On top of that, we had to pan over slightly as we pulled out and, since this was for a commercial, this all had to be accomplished in a very specific length of time."

Stephenson credits his long-term relationship with Stahl as containing "that extra little ingredient that provides the catalyst to creativity" which helped him overcome so many of the hurdles on this production. "Eric had a very clear idea of what he wanted and how he wanted to present the commercial," Stephenson recalled. "He always had a very strong sense of composition, and I respect his desire to strive to be original and exceptional."

The visual tone of the commercial was complemented by Kirk Hunter's forty-eight track musical score mastered on state-of-the-art Sony 3324

multi-track digital stereo recording equipment at Glen Glenn Sound in Hollywood.

For his follow-up campaign, Stahl devised a strongly visual concept that would serve not only to reinforce the message of the previous commercials, but also to destroy any remaining preconceived notions the audience might still possess regarding the Chevrolet Cavalier. "What we're essentially trying to say is this is not the plasticky/polyester car you're expecting from an American manufacturer," commented Stahl.

This latest creation, dubbed "It's Coming," consists of chromatic computer printouts detailing various systems in the Cavalier V6, intercut with mysteriously silhouetted, beauty shots and footage of the car racing directly toward the camera on a desolate road. Quick cross-cutting among these diverse elements creates a feeling of suspenseful anticipation as the car speeds closer, on a collision course with the viewer. The spot climaxes with the Cavalier actually passing through the camera in an impressive display of sight and sound. The words, "It's Here," print out over the wake of the car and hover above the empty road. Stahl's objective was "to grab the audience's attention by transforming their television sets into computer terminals, thereby making the viewer an interactive participant in the ensuing action."

The director of photography on this new effort was Luis Santiago, a Spaniard who learned his craft at the London Film School, and whose portfolio consists of numerous Spanish language commercials shot in Venezuela, Mexico and the United States. In Venezuela, Santiago had worked as a director/producer for advertising agencies for six years, and thereafter as director/cameraman for countless production companies. In 1980, he moved to Los Angeles, where he had to begin from scratch to re-establish himself. After painting cycs and shooting several video-tape and student productions, he eventually broke into the commercial market. Santiago has completed three campaigns and three features, *King Of The Streets, La Negritta,* and *Slapstick* (second unit) since relocating to Los Angeles.

As with the previous "Yes . . . It's A Chevy" campaign, Stahl's perfectionism and the tremendous variety of his imagery created numerous complications for his cameraman. "Eric is a very demanding director," said Santiago, "the whole style of the commercial really appealed to me. Eric's entire concept was completely fresh and original. The finished commercial is exactly like the storyboards, and it required a lot of technical knowledge to get those images in the can. The whole shoot, lenswise, was very simple, however. We used a 17mm close-focus on the exterior shot, and a 24mm on the stage." As with the previous commercials, the spot was shot exclusively with Golden Panaflex and Panastar cameras.

Lighting the Chaplin soundstage at A&M Records in Hollywood to Stahl's exacting specifications was the first of many problems Santiago had to overcome on this difficult shoot: "The car had to be kept in silhouette, and basically the only lighting effect was in the background, which wasn't an easy effect to achieve in the commercial. One of the difficulties was that the director wanted to have a degrade cyc, with the lightest part at the bottom. In order to achieve the look that Eric wanted, we had to devise a system of gels which were cut in such a way that the bottom of the gel was one layer, the second was two, the third three and so on. Then we used a layer of diffusion over the whole thing to hide the cuts."

Lighting the soundstage properly turned out to be the least of Santiago's problems on the production. The Mojave Desert airstrip was the site Stahl had selected to shoot the footage of the Cavalier speeding down a desolate road, but inclement weather conditions created numerous crises for the crew, as they fought to maintain their balance in 75 mph winds. The grip truck had to be placed behind the camera to prevent the Panavision equipment from blowing away, while the hi-hat was weighted down with several sandbags. The truck swayed back and forth like a ship on the high seas, and crew members were concerned it might blow over onto the camera equipment.

In order to make the audience believe that they were actually passing through the body of a Chevrolet Cavalier required much experimentation, which Stahl and Santiago performed at Panavision on a separate test day. "We decided that the only way to shoot it was in reverse," recalled Santiago, "but, since we had a close-focus extreme wide-angle lens, and we wanted to fill the screen with the Chevrolet bowtie logo, the front of the car had to almost touch the lens. We had trouble

A voyage down a great suspension bridge in San Francisco.

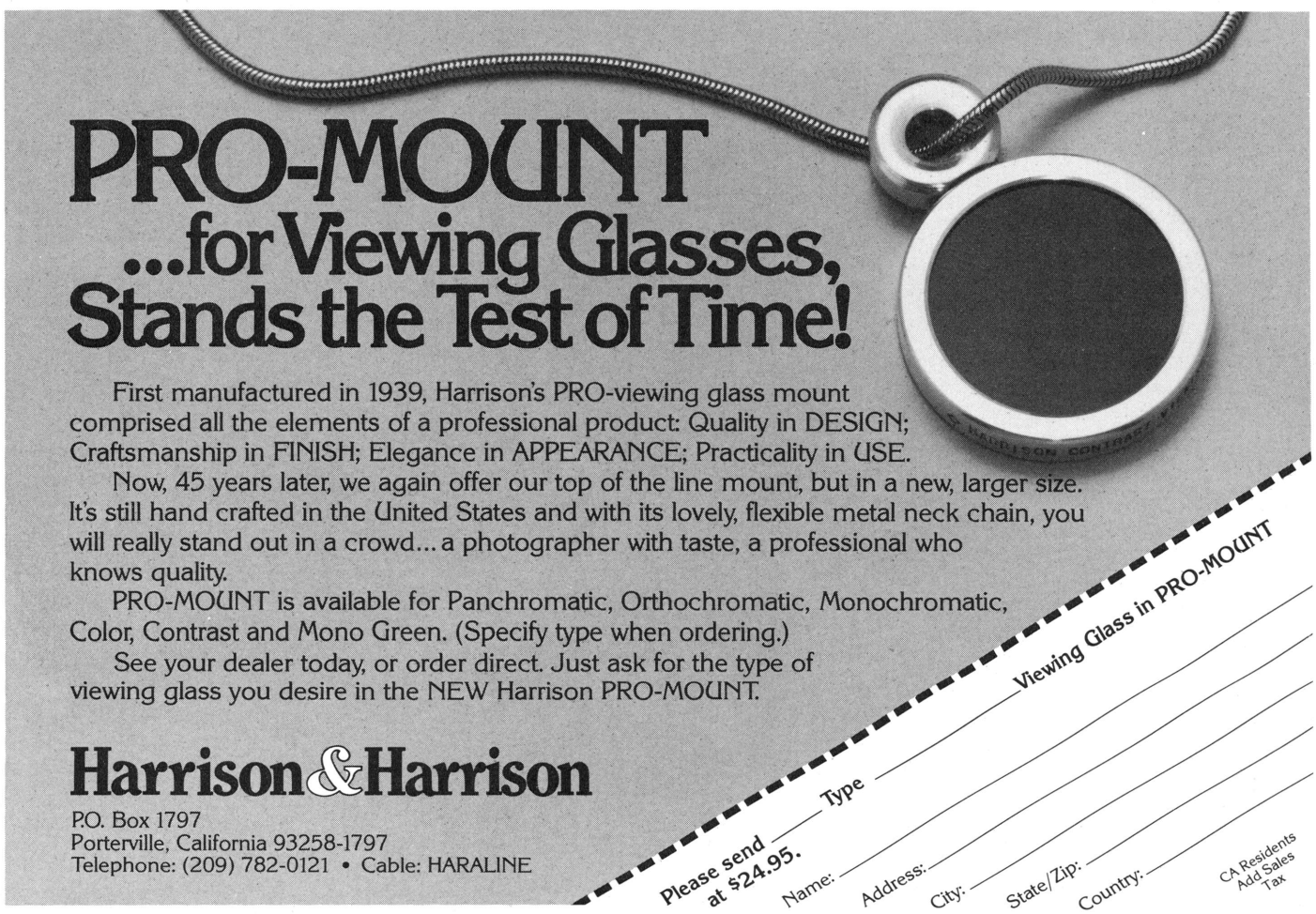
getting light into the logo, and we also had problems keeping the focus sharp from the logo to almost infinity as the car backed away from the lens."

Santiago also had to ensure that when the shot was played normally, the sensation of speed Stahl was looking for would still be present. "Since the shot was to be run in revese," Santiago commented, "the idea was not to get the car to go backwards quickly, but to undercrank the camera while the car went from zero to four miles per hour in almost no time. We had the people at Panavision adjust the circuit boards on our Golden Panaflex camera so we could shoot at two frames per second instead of the usual six. When the shot was finally played back, the Cavalier looked like it was doing sixty." Santiago credits the performance of the stunt driver, and the undercranking and focusing of the camera for the success of the shot.

There was an added pressure on the director and his crew: the three road shots, including the complex reverse shot, had to be accomplished during "magic hour," so Santiago and Stahl were forced to coordinate their shooting in sets. Santiago remembered, "We did a shot of the car approaching, then we did the reverse shot, and then the shot of the empty space we see at the end of the commercial. Every time we changed from one shot to another we had to recalculate the exposure, change the focus and the camera speed, and, at "magic hour," when you run out of light, you run out of time." For esthetic reasons, Stahl insisted on using Kodak's slower 5247 35mm film stock because of its color saturation and finer grain. Despite the fact that the faster 5294 stock would have been more practical, and Santiago wanted to use it, Stahl was willing to fight the problems to get the look he wanted. For Santiago, this choice meant that "the real 'magic hour' came at the tail end of the usable light range, which made it tougher. I knew it would only be our last few shots that would count, and at that point, there would be no time for a re-shoot."

Pleased with the success of the campaigns, Stahl is still anxious to break new ground in the commercial advertising field. "The most dangerous thing to do is to take the easy way out," says Stahl. "Nothing that achieves success is easy. The fact that these campaigns have had such an impact is proof that people are not as stupid as advertisers would have you believe, and advertising agencies are going to have to stop catering to what they perceive as the lowest common denominator. California is unquestionably the *in vitro* environment for the future marketing trends of the rest of the United States, and what works here today will work in the midwest in less than two or three years." Stahl is currently directing his energies toward developing the 1986 campaigns, and, although he's being rather tightlipped about Chevrolet's plans, he warns that "people should be prepared to experience the unexpected. They ain't seen nothin' yet." △

Ron Magid is a Los Angeles advertising writer who, in his spare time, collects movie memorabilia and writes articles for national magazines.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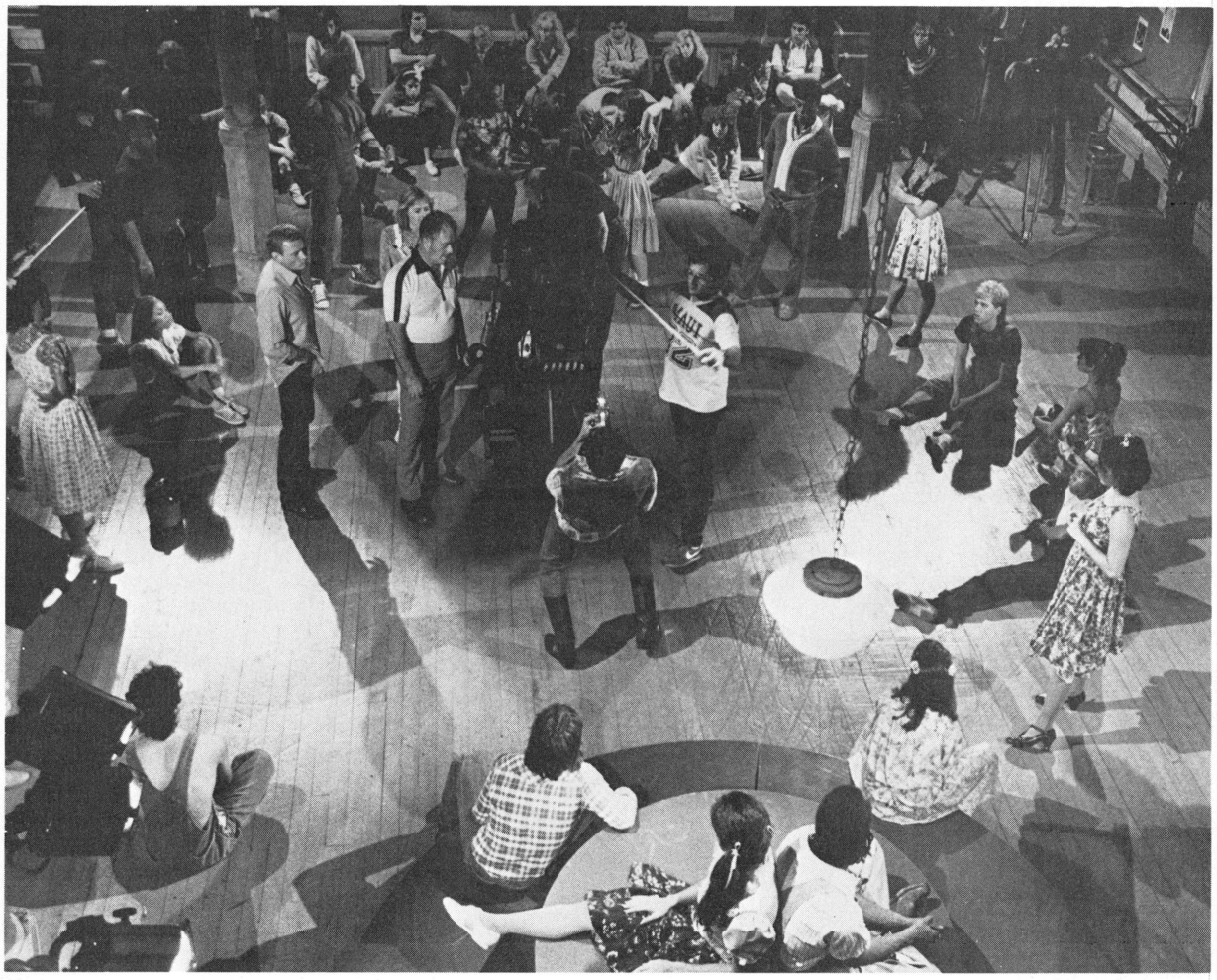
Fame, the Show That Refused to Die



by Bob Fisher

The title song for *Fame* has a line which goes, " . . . I'm gonna live forever."

Well, maybe not forever, but as it turns out, *Fame,* the TV show, is living a lot longer than network programmers had anticipated. They declared *Fame* dead as an episodic TV program more than two years ago.

They were wrong, and as a result, television programming may never be the same. *Fame* started as a surprise hit movie five years ago. It focused on a high school in New York City for students studying the performing arts.

The movie launched a look which has inspired scores of commercials and music videos, as well as an episodic TV series on the NBC network. The TV program was cancelled at the end of its second season, a victim of insufficient viewer interest by network standards.

End of story? Not by a long shot. *Fame* refused to die.

"There were a lot of people at MGM who believed that *Fame* was too good to die, and they were willing to bet a piece of their futures that they were right," says Ted Zachary, senior vice-president in charge of television production for the studio.

Fame is also proving some other things which are making many producers take notice. It was the first

Debbie Allen and Kunkel confer. **Center:** ***Kunkel with two cast members.*** **Below:** ***Cast and crew working on*** **Fame.**

35mm film episodic program to be transferred directly to video tape for postproduction. Ken Ehrlich, supervising producer, says that this is a big reason why *Fame* has been able to trim 7 to 10 percent from its below-the-line production budget. These savings were a must if the program was going to survive.

The show was cancelled in April of 1983. Within several months, MGM had put together commitments from more than 100 TV stations to assure a third season, only this time in first-run syndication. The challenge was finding a way to trim some $75,000 to $100,000 from the budget for each episode without sacrificing entertainment or production values.

That was the difference between what the network paid in license fees and anticipated earnings from first-run syndication. "We considered all of the alternatives," says Ehrlich, who was hired at that juncture. Not too many captains are willing to climb aboard a sinking ship.

Ehrlich has a strong background in producing video and live music and variety programs, including four Grammy Awards Shows. "We considered shooting 16mm film to save money, and even thought about one-inch video tape production, but not too seriously," he says.

Art director Ira Diamond and set designer Joseph Jung earned Emmys for *Fame,* as did director of photography Bill Spencer, ASC. "The show is a fantasy. We didn't think we could survive if we changed the look. Our audience would have felt cheated. The FAME look makes the kids and the school real, and the dream true for our audience," says Zachary.

Unit production manager Denny Salvaryn explains that tests were shot comparing 16mm and 35mm scenes. The 16mm color film looked "darn good," he remembers; however, when it was put up side by side with the 35mm footage, the difference was perceptible.

Video origination was never seriously considered. "We didn't think that *Fame* could survive a tape look," says Ehrlich. "This isn't a sit-com. It's a drama with music. We needed a texture for our images – a *Fame* look which you just can't get with video."

A decision was also made to bring FAME almost entirely inside MGM's Culver City lot. There were already outstanding interior sets of the school. Diamond and Jung went on to create a huge New York street set which represents the outside of the school.

The standing sets have the taste as well as the look of New York. That left cinematographer Sherman Kunkel, ASC, with the not insurmountable task of making it look and feel real. "I started with the look that Bill (Spencer) established, and built on it," he says. "One of the things that I had working for me is the fact that everyone is so enthusiastic about what they are doing. The kids are always singing and dancing, even when they aren't on camera, and that emotion comes through on the film."

The decision to bring the show almost entirely onto the lot – two episodes were produced in Manhattan while the Olympic Games were being played in Los Angeles, and that did create an inventory of New York street scenes – has had some considerable economic impact.

"You start burning money when you are rolling trucks to locations, and paying caterers, and renting someone's kitchen to shoot in for $5,000 a day," Salvaryn says.

However, the biggest savings came from the decision to transfer the original negative to video tape for post-production. No one had ever done that before, not on a weekly TV program, and so there were no real ground rules.

Everyone you speak to at MGM says that an enormous share of the credit belongs to Frank Merwald, an associate producer who shepherds the visual aspects of the program through the process of coming to air one-day-at-a-time, Bruce Pobjoy, post-production supervisor for MGM, and the two original editors Jim McElroy and Howard Brock (who won an Emmy for videotape editing on this show).

"They were instrumental," says Ehrlich. "There were no precedents. They put all of the pieces together, and decided what equipment we should buy, how we should use it, and where we needed outside help. We didn't make a single wrong move. Everything has worked out just about the way they projected."

John Farrell cuts* Fame *on video tape which has been transferred from original negative.

Fame is shot entirely on Eastman color high speed negative film 5294. "We are using hard, pre-set lighting, which is possible because we are working on standing sets," says Kunkel. "The high-speed film allows us to work at comparatively low light levels."

His basic key light for interiors is around 50 footcandles. On the big "outdoor set," he generally works within the range of 50 to 70 footcandles of key light, depending on the time of day and weather being simulated. This allows him to work at stop T-4 most of the time, which is needed to pull the necessary depth of field on a show which has eight principal characters and 50 to 75 other players.

However, when he is shooting a night exterior on the big set, Kunkel turns off the overhead arcs and 10-Ks and uses floaters and coops to put together a key light in the area of 30 footcandles.

Kunkel, who earned an Emmy nomination for *Fame* the first season that he shot it, strives for realism. "In real life, the background doesn't go soft or hazy," he says.

Once a scene is laid out, Kunkel will typically spend up to an hour setting up supplementary key and fill lights on the big street set, using coops and arcs, and comparatively small floaters. It generally takes around 20 minutes to set up an interior master shot.

Fame, with all of its production values, is shot in seven days. The film is processed by MGM Labs, while the sound department at the studio is transferring the quarter-inch audio tape recorded daily to 35mm single strip. The laboratory then assembles the "circled takes" – the scenes which will be printed – on 900 foot rolls.

At 6 a.m., the day after production, the reels of negative circled takes and single stripe daily tracks are delivered to the Randken Company, in Hollywood, where the sound is synchronized to the negative. At this point, the synchronized film and sound are brought to Complete Post, in Hollywood, where a Rank-Cintel MARK-3C Flying Spot Scanner color telecine is used to make simultaneous one-inch and three-quarter film-to-video tape transfers.

Since the first production models of the Rank-Cintel telecine were brought into this country in 1977, increasing numbers of national, and now regional and even local commercials, have followed this route – going from original negative to video tape. More recently, many of the best music videos have adopted this strategy.

Advocates will tell you that the negative-to-video look is "purer" than the print-to-video look which is much more typical for television programming. "It's one generation closer to the original negative, and the look is definitely less contrasty," says Merwald. "I think that it is cleaner, crisper and sharper."

However, there has been a certain nervousness about this issue. An original negative represents an irreplaceable investment for the producer. "In the early days I had nightmares

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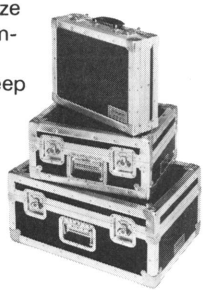

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about the telecine chewing up thousands of feet of negative," Merwald admits. The fact is from day-one, *Fame* has never lost a frame of film during the transfer process.

A more subjective concern deals with the issue of preserving the artistic intentions of the cinematographer. The Rank-Cintel telecine provides considerable latitude for the operator to modify contrast and hues. Since the first day that film was programmed on television, producers and TV engineers have chewed on this issue like an old dog hassling a big bone.

Broadcast engineers generally want maximum video, which translates to a very bright "up" look with characteristic flat lighting. Basically, they want to put the best possible picture on the air, as they see it, within the limitations of the NTSC television system and the standards established by the FCC.

Film people, however, have fought hard to present a more sophisticated picture with a broader range of contrast, and subtle details painted with light in both shadow and highlight areas. No one is willing to sacrifice the gains made in this arena on the altar of new technology – not even for a tool as intriguing as the new color telecines.

Fame is a relatively low-key show. Most of the school sets are institutional browns, greens and grays, and the lighting is moody. However, Kunkel has made the most of this situation. There are pools of shadows and bright splashes of light pouring through windows and clouds on street scenes. The cameraman has also created night with great effect on the exterior set, and he has even filmed a believable artificial snow storm.

While the sets are basically down and drab, the students' clothing is generally colorful, and brightly hued spotlights are used to accent dance numbers. All of this makes up the key elements of the look the producers want translated to video tape.

Part of Merwald's task is to function as a cross between a color timer and the cameraman's advocate at Complete Post. "I spend time on the set everyday," he says, "so I have a sense and a feel of what the show should look like."

He is there, all of the time, while the telecine operator is making the transfers. "On a typical day we'll spend 2 to 3 hours timing and color correcting 30 to 60 minutes of dailies," he says. "Even when I'm not in the room, we have insisted on working with the same telecine operator (Chris Devlin) as much as possible, and so he has become thoroughly familiar with the *Fame* look."

By 12:30 p.m., Merwald is headed back to MGM with a three-quarter-inch viewing cassette for screening dailies. Then, about 3 p.m., Complete Post delivers time-coded, editorial cassettes on three-quarter-inch tape.

The 3 p.m. delivery is the workprint used by the video editing team assembled by Pobjoy. The offline video editing system represented a $300,000 investment for the studio, so Pobjoy wanted to be as certain as possible that MGM obtained a workable, reliable system that wasn't going to be obsolete before the investment was recovered.

"We investigated every tape editing system, and visited post-production houses all over town," says Pobjoy, who explains that one objective was to push the boundaries of the technology toward what was possible rather than what was currently popular.

MGM chose a Bargen ISC 31 video editing system which it uses in conjunction with Sony BVU 800 video recorders. Dave Bargen was one of the early developers of the CMX editing system.

Pobjoy likes the fact that the recorders are sturdy and proven, and that the video editing system is compatible with equipment used by Complete Post.

At the same time, if MGM ever opts to bring online editing in-house, the Bargen ISC 31 system could easily be modified to handle the one-inch format.

Pobjoy set up two parallel offline editing facilities. This is where some important savings come into play. Previously, *Fame* had three film editing teams, and it typically took five weeks, starting with the first day of shooting, to complete each episode. Now, two teams of editors accomplish the same job. Average production time for each episode is 25 days, and in a pinch, a show has been finished in 21 days.

"You are talking about saving $80,000 a year in this one area alone," says Pobjoy, and that doesn't account for reduced lab and optical costs.

J. P. Farrell joined the editing team this year, replacing Brock, who went on to another assignment. Farrell earned his spurs as a film editor on David Gerber's *Police Story* anthology series. He is among a relatively small cadre of film editors who have made the transition to video editing, counting *Blood Feud,* a mini-series, and *After Mash,* an episodic program, among his credits. Both of these shows followed the original negative to video postproduction route.

"I find this very relaxing compared to cutting film," he says. "The video system gives you the time and opportunity to try more things. You can look at a scene cut for six seconds and put up an eight-second version, and decide which, if either, does the job best. Of course, you can also do that with film, but it takes longer."

Time is important on a show like this. Pobjoy says that a typical *Fame* episode will have at least 600 cuts, and 900 are not unusual.

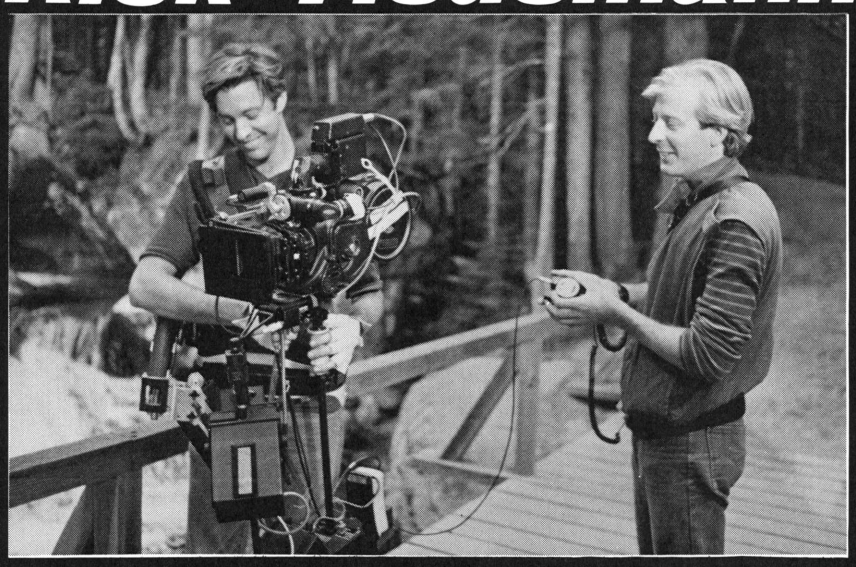
Farrell also has a sense that he is cutting a little bit tighter on the dialogue. "Video editing might give you that little extra edge," he says, "However, the main thing, whether you are cutting film or tape, is that you want to preserve the look and feel of the show."

Generally, Farrell is starting to edit one episode, while McElroy is finishing another. The end product from the offline editing process is a floppy disk with cut and electronic optical instructions which conform to a SMPTE time-code on the address track. There is also a hard copy printout of editing instructions, made up for online that duplicates the editorial decisions on the floppy disc. A 3/4-inch cassette of the final show is also used in online for verification if any discrepancies should arise.

"We clean and trace the list, which means that we make certain that it conforms to the editor's final cut, before it is delivered to Complete Post for online editing," says Merwald.

In the first run, a textless one-inch master is automatically assembled. The text or credits are left out at this point to allow for foreign lan-

Rick Tiedemann



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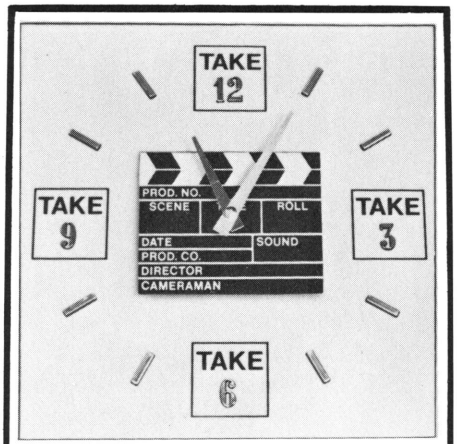

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guage titles for overseas distribution. Merwald and the online editor (Joe Bella) review the one-inch master to make certain that nothing has been lost in the conforming process.

Kunkel has been in the business about 25 years, starting in the loading room at 20th Century-Fox. He worked on the crews of such masters as Ray Rennehan, ASC, Walter Strenge, ASC, Lionel Linden, ASC, and Jack Marta, ASC. Kunkel was operating for Harry Wolf, ASC, on *Baretta,* when he was given the opportunity to move up to first camera on that show.

His TV credits include *Hawaii Five-O, Fantasy Island, B.J. and the Bear,* some episodes of *Magnum P.I.* and *Joe Dancer,* a number of made-for-television movies, and nothing remotely approaching the look or style of *Fame.*

The show is shot with a Mitchell camera, which may be 40 years old. Obviously, it cost less to rent than Panavision equipment, and Kunkel says that nothing is lost in production capabilities. "We are on a dolly on a sound stage all of the time anyway," he says. *Fame* is basically a one-camera show, except for the once-a-week production number, which Kunkel shoots with two Mitchell cameras – one camera is isolated on a main performer while the other is on a wide shot of the ensemble. "This cuts our shooting time considerably, and it gives the editors more to work with," he explains.

Kunkel rates the 5294 emulsion for EI 320 on this show, which is about a half-stop "slower" than the exposure index recommended by Kodak.

"That's what Bill (Spencer) was doing, and I didn't want to change the look," says Kunkel. He believes that the extra half-stop gives the film a little more snap, though adding that in different situations he has rated 5294 film for EIs of 400 and 500.

"Everyone had his own approach to using the high-speed emulsion," he says. "It depends on the film you are shooting and how you like to work. It all boils down to the same thing. We are using smaller units, which generate less heat and require less power and air conditioning. We can work faster." And that's particularly important on a show like this with its

large cast and complex production numbers.

However, Kunkel has cut back some on key light since taking over the show. "Those two episodes we shot in Manhattan helped a lot," he says. "It gave me a better idea of what the city looks like – the quality of light."

"The more you use the high-speed film, the easier it gets to visualize what it is 'seeing,' and you can stop down accordingly," he explains. "We've tested just about every situation on these sets, so I trust myself to look through the lens and see exactly what the show is going to look like if I subtract some light here and add a shadow there."

Kunkel says that a typical script runs about 50 pages, and he is shooting about a page an hour. But, when you watch him light the New York street set, thinking where the sun should be at that time of day, considering where the cast will be moving, what the mood is, and where the main action is happening – and he throws a bit of light on a car hood here and a windshield there, starting at the top of the street and working down, carefully considering where the shadows should fall – you know that he has a lot more on his mind than keeping to that grinding schedule.

"Everybody wants you to work fast," he says, "but what really counts is the look of the show. You don't cut corners with that – not if you don't want to end up on the outside looking in."

How does he feel about not seeing dailies on film, and knowing that his film is edited on tape?

"I have no problem with that at all," he answers. "Frank Merwald and the people at Complete Post read my notes, and he is on the set practically every day. They know what I am trying to do. I can talk to them the same way that I would talk to a color timer at a lab."

Kunkel says that he looks at a three-quarter-inch cassette daily to see where he was yesterday. It's a lot like looking at a time and color corrected print, he observes.

"I don't mind looking at video dailies because that's the way the audience sees the show," Kunkel says.

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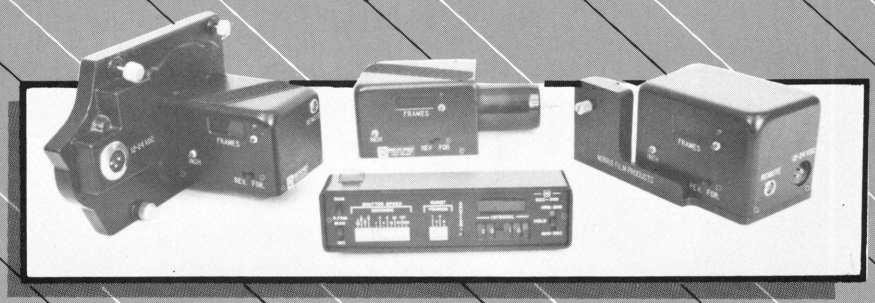

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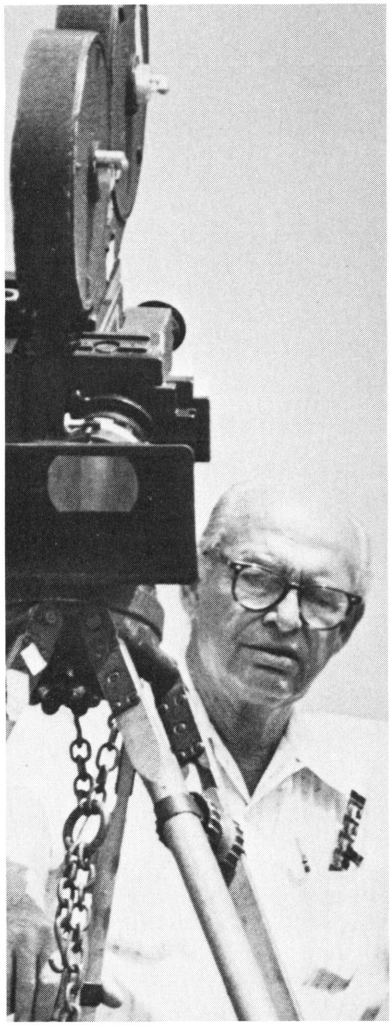

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How about transferring from a negative instead of a print?

"I like the negative look," he replies, "but it doesn't affect anything I do. I would light the same way in any case."

Everyone involved with *Fame* will volunteer that they have learned a lot, and they all believe they are working on the frontiers of the future. There is general agreement that in subsequent years more episodic TV will be produced this way.

"I think the show has an even richer look than before," says Ehrlich. "It's like we are making a short feature film every week."

He adds, "I'm excited about the things which have happened here during the past few years. We've helped to bring film and video people a lot closer, and we have melded music much more into the story concept. I think this is just the beginning. I was mainly a live or a tape person when I came here, and now I love the tactile feel of film."

Zachary comments, "When you look at what is happening with television programming with the VCR and cable, it is obvious you aren't going to see a lot of shows anymore which earn 30 and 40 shares. Many of the things we have done with *Fame* are going to be emulated. If you commit to a show, like we have, you can afford to design and build great sets, and you can use the fast film to reduce production costs and save time. Electronic Postproduction is inevitable at least for episodic TV."

Pobjoy believes that more and more episodic TV will be posted this way within the next three to five years. "It will keep getting better," he predicts. "Randken and Complete Post have developed a way to improve our soundtrack by skipping the daily transfer. We can now synchronize right from the original quarter-inch tape."

He is keeping an eye on the evolution of Eastman Datakode magnetic control surface, which could eliminate the need for using a clapstick on the set and assembling circle prints by hand; and, Pobjoy believes that a practical video disk system will someday make it easier for editors like McElroy and Farrell to manipulate more images.

However, the real breakthrough, he says, won't come until more film editors are trained to do video editing.

Why aren't more film editors working with video tape? It isn't the time that it takes to learn a new editing system, it's the emotions involved. "You don't want to feel that you are sacrificing your art," Farrell explains. "It only took me about a week to learn the CBS video editing system when I was editing *After-Mash,* and it was just about a month before I had everything down pretty good."

It also took about a week for him to learn to use the MGM video editing system, though Farrell adds, "I'm still learning all the time."

Merwald believes that most episodic film programs will be edited electronically within 5 to 10 years. He also would like to try videotape postproduction on a theatrical feature. His scenario: Edit tape off-line. When the off-line editing is complete, the editor cleans and traces his list and produces a computer readout of edge code numbers so the negative can be conformed for theatrical release.

The *Fame* experience indicates that once the wheels of progress start grinding, things can happen in a hurry. Within two months of the cancellation announcement, *Fame* was in preproduction planning for the new season, and by late August, filming had resumed. The record shows it was the first time a cinematographer has been nominated for an Emmy for an off-network episodic film show.

"I really felt honored," Kunkel remembers. "When you think of all the shows on the air, to have yours singled out as one of the five best is wonderful." It's more than that: It's almost a miracle when you consider that Kunkel earned his nomination during a season when necessity chewed a big bite out of the production budget. △

Bob Fisher is a free lance writer based in Encinitas, California.

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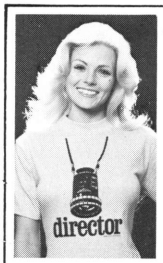

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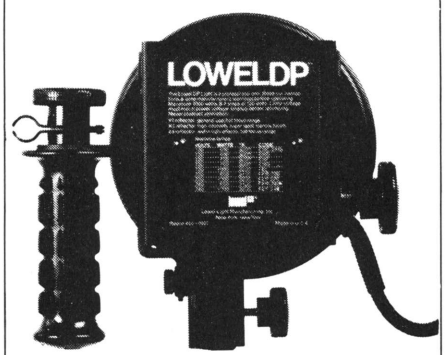

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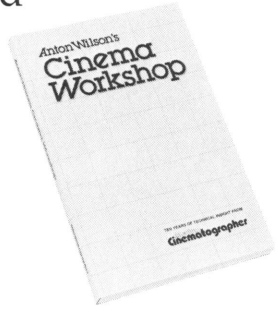

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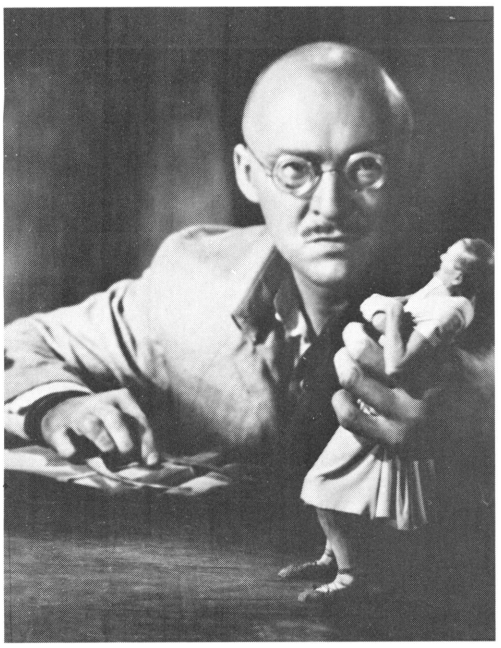

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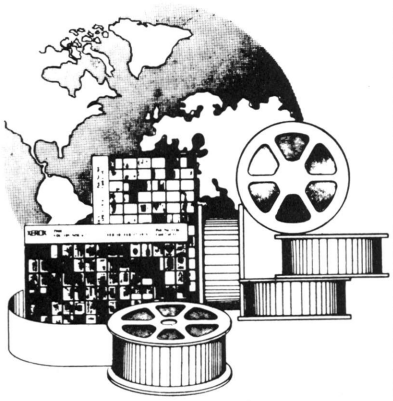

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From the Clubhouse

Five members of American Society of Cinematographers have been nominated for Emmy awards.

Ted Voigtlander, ASC, received nominations this year for a special, *The Bad Seed,* and also for an episode of the series, "Highway to Heaven." Currently on location for the Michael Landon series now into a new season's production, Voigtlander planned to fly back to Pasadena from Arizona for the ceremonies. This year marks his 16th Emmy nomination.

Sherwood Omens, ASC, was nominated for cinematography of a limited series, *Evergreen.* This was his second nomination, having been noted earlier for a two-hour *Magnum PI* special. Omens is currently working on *An Early Frost,* movie special for NBC.

Joseph Biroc, ASC, received an Emmy nomination for his work on the special, *A Death in California.* He has been nominated for Emmys eight times, winning one for *Brian's Song* and one for *Casablanca,* both television features. Biroc has just completed shooting *The Pete Gray Story,* a feature.

Wallenberg, a Hero's Story, is the special for which Charles Correll, ASC, received his second nomination. He won an Emmy previously for *Winds of War.* Correll is currently shooting and directing *Our Family Honor* for ABC television.

Phil Lathrop, ASC received his second Emmy nomination this year for *Malice in Wonderland,* a special. Lathrop was named in nominations last year for *Celebrity,* a television special. He is currently working on a project for Warner Brothers and NBC.

In the classification of "Outstanding Cinematography for a Series," four ASC members were nominated: Edward R. Brown for "Scarecrow and Mrs. King," Brianne Murphy and Ted Voigtlander for "Highway to Heaven," and John Elsenbach for "Codename: Foxfire." Brown shared an Emmy last year for *Eleanor and Franklin,* a TV special. He is working on the new season's episodes of "Scarecrow." Ms. Murphy was previously nominated twice and won once for *Breaking Away.*

Newly elected to the associate membership of A.S.C. is Arthur Tostado. He is a laboratory contact man for Consolidated Film Industries, and has been employed there for 16 years. Tostado, formerly a color timer, is a Los Angeles resident, is married and has two children. △

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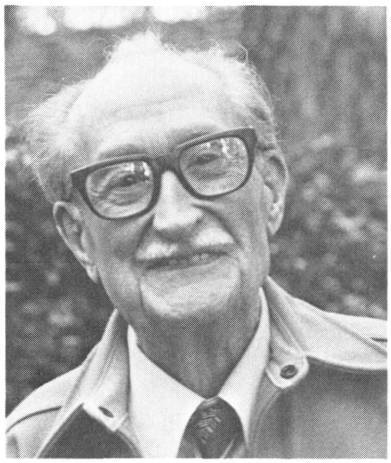
In Memoriam

Joseph B. Walker, ASC, who photographed more than 160 feature films and created many inventions used by the industry, died August 1 at Las Vegas, Nevada. He was 92. Walker's greatest fame came during his 24 years at Columbia, where he photographed 17 of Frank Capra's 24 productions (an 18th was made at RKO) including *Dirigible, Flight, It Happened One Night, Mr. Deeds Goes to Town, Lost Horizon, You Can't Take It With You, Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and *It's a Wonderful Life.*

He was born in Denver on August 22, 1892, the son of Bolivar K. Walker, a mining engineer, and the former Jerusha Bailey. In 1910, the family settled in Venice, California, where young Joe became assistant to the pioneer radio and electronics genius, Dr. Lee DeForest. He made history in 1911 by making the first wireless news report from an aviation meet to the Venice *Vanguard,* using an apparatus of his own design. In 1912 he built the first wireless transmitters for airplanes and autos and set up the first retail wireless store department. In 1913 he reported from the battlefronts of the Mexican Revolution via wireless to the Los Angeles *Times.*

Borrowing a movie camera, he taught himself the fundamentals of cinematography. His film career began in 1914 with a day's work on a picture about California missions. Soon he was shooting newsreels for Gaumont News, Kinograms, and the Hearst-Selig News, as well as documentaries and industrial films. His first feature, *Back to God's Country* (1919), starring Nell Shipman, was made under incredibly hard conditions in Northern Alberta.

Meantime, he was inventing things. His technical achievements include a variable diffusion system, which was sold to Mitchell Camera Co.; a composite effects printing system which was purchased by the Williams Process Company; a comparator exposure meter, an aerial image device, and a flashlight



used to aid the blind. His most famous invention is the Electra-Zoom Lens, which was sold to RCA and the Zeiss Optical Corporation. He developed cryptographic and aerial equipment during World War II. For Todd-AO he designed and manufactured wide-angle lenses for use with 65mm film.

On his 84th birthday he was inducted into the Motion Picture Hall of Fame for "outstanding contributions to the art of making motion pictures," and in 1982 he received the first Gordon Sawyer Award of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for "numerous important technical contributions for the advancement of the motion picture industry." He received Academy nominations for *You Can't Take It With You* (1938), *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* (1941) and *The Jolson Story* (1946). With his wife, Juanita, a writer and photographer, he wrote the current autobiographical book, *The Light on Her Face.*

At services in Las Vegas, Frank Capra said, "He was a genius in his work, a real genius . . . probably the best photographer we ever had and assuredly the best-loved . . . I have nothing but respect for this man. / helped *him* make pictures."

Survivors are his wife; a daughter, Marjorie Walker, and grandchildren Gary Coppin and Cynthia Kennedy. △

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